Inviting to the Way of Allah

Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Published by:
Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd.
and
UK Islamic Academy

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Copyright © 1416/1996,
Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd. and UK Islamic Academy

Jointly published by
Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd.
1 Wynne Road
London SW9 0BB
and
UK Islamic Academy,
147, Mere Road,
Leicester LE5 5GQ

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or otherwise, without written permission of the publishers.

By: Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi
Translated by: Qazi Abdul Hamid
Edited by: ᶜAbdassamad Clarke

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Nadwi, Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali
Inviting to the Way of Allah
I. Title

ISBN 1 897940 37 8

Typeset by: ᶜAbdassamad Clarke.
Printed and bound by: Deluxe Printers, London.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Contents

Introduction 5
Preface 7
Different Ways of Conveying Islam 8
Two Examples of the Prophet Ibrahim 15
The Way of the Prophet Yusuf 24
The Way of the Prophet Musa 35
Musa and Bani Isra'il 49
A Believer Who Hid His Faith 60
Two Examples of the Final Prophet of Islam 75
Ja'far ibn Abi Talib as an Emissary 91

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Introduction

The closing days of the fourteenth *hijri* century proved auspicious for Darul Uloom as a new faculty was opened with a four year course teaching the principles and methodology of preaching. It was named the Department of Da'wah and Islamic Thought. At the conclusion of the first session, Mawlana Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi delivered eight lectures (in Arabic) on the "Way of Inviting People to Allah in the Glorious Qur'an" and another renowned scholar of the Muslim world, Dr. Sheikh Yusuf Qarzawi spoke on "Islamic Thought".

It is the speciality of Darul Uloom that it has included in its curriculum study of the text of the Glorious Qur'an (in the light of traditional exegesis). For the Glorious Qur'an and Arabic literature, which can mould the mind of a student studying the Glorious Qur'an as a living book with special interest in Arabic literature, are absolutely necessary for imbibing from the original sources of Islam the true spirit of inviting people to Allah.

What are the qualifications of one who invites to Allah? What mode of address should one adopt in inviting people to Allah? What is meant by wisdom (*hikmah*) which is a necessary condition for inviting people to Allah (as mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an)?

"Invite (the people) to the way of your Lord with

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

wisdom and fair exhortation..."
(Qur'an, *an-Nahl:* 125)

The Glorious Qur'an provides answers to all these questions in such novel and cogent manners that nobody can think of better ways. The Glorious Qur'an reproduces the dialogues of the prophets, peace be upon all of them, with their contemporaries and shows how they silenced the quibblers, the way they conveyed the glad tidings to the obedient and the mode they adopted in warning the disobedient, how they invited the people to the 'way of Allah'. Nobody, especially those who invite others to Allah, can do justice to such a vocation without deep study of these principles which are eternal and unbounded by time and place.

I pray that Allah may bless these lectures with acceptance and make them useful for *ʿulama*, those who invite others to Allah and the Muslims in general and that He may bestow good health and long life on the lecturer. Amen!

Muhammad Rabey Nadwi,
Head of the Faculty of Dawah
and Islamic Thought,
Darul Uloom,
Nadwatul Ulama,
Lucknow.
16th Jamad-al-Ula, 1401
23rd March 1981

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Preface

This short collection of eight lectures on the Way of Inviting (People to Allah) in the light of the Glorious Qur'an will open vistas for students and specialists alike. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said "The wonders of the Glorious Qur'an never cease". The present book is a clear proof of this tradition. Even though, not thousands, but tens of thousands of books have been written during the last fourteen hundred years, still the subject here appears new and the *ayat* (of the Glorious Qur'an) have not lost their freshness.

Scholars know the importance of this call to the 'Way o Allah' and they are aware of the two key principles of 'wisdom' and 'fair exhortion'. But few realise that the Glorious Qur'an does not leave these terms vague but lays down broad but distinct outlines by giving examples of the ways the prophets (peace be on them all) called their peoples to Allah. There is, therefore, no need for those who invite others to Allah to borrow anything from outside.

This book is an important addition to the innumerable works on the Glorious Qur'an and inspite of its small size it rivals voluminous works.

(Dr.) Abdullah Abbas Nadwi,
King Abdul Aziz University,
Makkah

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Different Ways of Conveying Islam

What is the way of inviting people to Allah according to the Glorious Qur'an? What guidance does it provide those who invite? How did the prophets, peace be on them all, invite others to Allah? What principles did they apply in presenting the 'invitation to the way of Allah'? What qualifications does it lay down for those who invite? Are there any pre-ordained limits and fixed methods which one has to observe and which can be learnt by a student at a school?

The subject is very important and, at the same time, directly related to the Glorious Qur'an. The importance and magnitude of the subject is further enhanced when the resplendent and thought provoking aspect of the Qur'an – its content and purpose – come together within it.

The Glorious Qur'an is a book of guidance and invitation and a book of divine laws and commands. But invitation and guidance dominate the other subjects in it. There is no denying the importance of the *shari'ah* and the obligations – their greatness is an admitted fact – but it is a question of priority (*awwaliyah*). Which aspect has priority over others? If viewed from this angle, then, according to me, the aspect of invitation to Allah and guidance is dominant (*ghalib*) over the commands and *shari'ah* in the Glorious Qur'an. It is because the foundation of faith (*iman*)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

is guidance (*hidayah*) and 'to believe' depends on an invitation to Allah and instruction in that.

'Invitation' is Not Bound by Rules

What principles have been laid down by the Glorious Qur'an for invitation to Allah and instruction? Does it lay down fixed and inflexible rules? I think the method is not described in the language of law nor is it expedient to do so. The mode depends on the prevailing conditions, the people addressed and so on.

Conditions change with the time and the art of inviting people to Allah also needs ready wit and presence of mind. Besides, the one inviting to Allah must have a deep understanding of human psychology and the weak points of society. It cannot be said with finality that he should do one thing and desist from another, that he should adopt such a method and present his 'invitation' (*da'wah*) in a particular manner. He has to face some situations in a particular society and very different situations in other societies.

He cannot, therefore, be bound by fixed rules and regulations. The Arabs have been gifted with a unique capacity to learn from past experiences. An Arab scholar has said:

> "If you have to send an emissary then select a wise and learned person and do not advise him too much. He will use his intellect as the situation demands and it will be perfectly in accord with what you intended."

The Limitations of 'Invitation'

The job of inviting to Allah is very delicate and yet wide in scope. It has, however, certain limitations. If viewed from

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

the standpoint of time, it started when the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, initiated the invitation (among his people) and it will continue to the end of time. Likewise, it is not confined to any particular place. It is worldwide. But it is just possible that one inviting others who is working in the East may be required to work in the West or vice versa. If he is adept in inviting the people in the East, he may not be able to do full justice to his mission in the West, or if he understands the psychology of the people of a particular place, his knowledge may not be of any use to him or bear fruits at another place.

A Miraculous *ayah* Regarding Invitation to the Way of Allah

It is a living miracle of the Glorious Qur'an that it has not set limits for the way of inviting others to Allah. It has left it to the discretion and better judgement of the one who invites. The decision as to when and where a particular way is to be used is to be determined by his ardour and genius. The fervour of Allah-consciousness which dominates his personality will guide him to the way in a particular situation. The Glorious Qur'an has, however, set certain limits within which the entire work has to be both confined and carried on:

> **"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortion and argue with them with that which is the best. Lo! your Lord is best aware of him who strays from His way, and He is best aware of those who go right."**
> (Qur'an, *an-Nahl:* 125)

The two aspects of inviting to the way of Allah are clear from the above *ayah* – how much freedom the one who calls enjoys and where it comes to an end. How far he can go and where he should terminate his endeavour (it is pro-

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

hibited for him [to go beyond]). So far as its wide scope and his freedom are concerned, they are apparent from the words:

"Invite to the way of your Lord."

The *ayah* does not ask him to 'invite' the people towards faith (*iman*), true belief, prayers, good example or call upon the people to respect human rights. No such thing has been mentioned in particular since all these aspects are covered in the phrase **"to the way of your Lord"**.

These words open new horizons of thought and action, for they are not limited. They cover other revealed religions, human needs – present and future – in short, everything that needs to be taught. The word 'invite' has a very wide implication. It is not binding that the 'invitation' be made through spoken words, writings or public talks. It covers all these methods. One who calls can utilise this advice in performing his duties – lectures, discussion or writing as required in a given situation. He can adopt other methods of propagation also – in fact, all of those means which are permissible and effective. Then it has been said **"to the way of your Lord"**. No interpretation of these words is possible except those mentioned above. The words are profound and comprehensive. The words *hikmah* (wisdom) and *mawʿizah* (exhortation) and *ahsan* (best, most beautiful) used in the Glorious Qur'an are full of meanings. It is not easy to translate them into any other language. The Glorious Qur'an sets certain limits but gives complete freedom to the one who invites to the way of Allah to work within these limits. The *ayah* is brief, but unambiguous; it is clear and lucid.

"Invite (the people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation."
(Qur'an, *an-Nahl* 125)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

This *ayah* was revealed in the context of the mission of the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him – the greatest to invite to the way of Allah prior to the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

"Truly, Ibrahim was a 'nation' obedient to Allah, by nature upright and he was not of the idolaters! Thankful for His bounties; He chose him and He guided him to a straight path. And We gave him good in the world and in the Hereafter; and he is among the righteous. And afterwards We revealed to you (Muhammad saying): 'Follow the religion of Ibrahim, as one by nature upright. He was not of the idolaters.'"
(Qur'an, *an-Nahl* 120-123)

Then He says:

"Invite to the way of your Lord."

The *ayah* is, therefore, linked with the teaching of *tawhid* by the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. It also indicates the relationship between the person of the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and his conveying the Truth (*Haqq*) thereby showing that he was a perfect example for the way of conveying the truth which reflects the principles of '**wisdom and fair exhortation**'.

The Glorious Qur'an has adopted the method of citing examples and gives detailed narrations of particular cases of prophets inviting people to Allah. This method is obviously more effective and convincing. It is also more useful for obtaining the desired results. If the Glorious Qur'an has not prescribed hard and fast rules for 'invitation to Allah', it has, on the other hand, filled the gap (if it can be called a gap) with life-sketches, discourses and talks of

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

the prophets, peace be upon all of them. These examples are very effective in creating a clear impression and creating a miraculous effect in the mind of the reader because the impact of these examples of powerful speakers could not have been created by any other means. Philosophical, psychological and other methods have not proved successful in the preaching of religion. All the revealed books have become masterpieces of classic literature by virtue of their alluring diction in describing the practical examples of those who propagated their message.

These are derived in the Qur'an mostly from the lives of four selected prophets, peace be upon all of them. These messengers of Allah are Ibrahim, Yusuf, Musa and Muhammad, peace be upon all of them, who portray perfect examples of invitation to Allah and instruction by a Muslim.

The important point, which the Glorious Qur'an has not left out, is that it has not confined itself to the words and deeds of the prophets alone. If it had been so, the common man would think that he "stands nowhere in comparison to the great prophets. They are the chosen ones and blessed with prophethood and revelation. They were assisted and aided by the Angel Jibril, peace be upon him." How could he then imitate the prophets, peace be upon all of them? It is not possible for him to fill their shoes.

The Glorious Qur'an has, therefore, cited the example of a person who was not a prophet nor one who had enjoyed the company of a prophet for very long. He was a Muslim belonging to the people of Fir'awn. The Glorious Qur'an has mentioned:

"And a believing man of Fir'awn's people, who hid his faith."
(Qur'an, *al-Mumin* 28)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The circumstances in which he was living did not allow him to reveal his faith. He could not announce his creed like Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, ʿUmar Faruq and Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with them, however staunch he might have been in his faith; but he was a true Muslim. He did not fight against his brethren and acquaintances but he still discharged his duty as a friend and a well-wisher. The story is a good example for a man of understanding and intelligence, for a person placed in similar circumstances. If this is not the case, still, he can infer from his words the mode of presentation which acquaints others with truth.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Two Examples of the Prophet Ibrahim

One was when he presented the Truth (*Haqq*) to his father and the other was when he addressed his people. There is a marked difference between the two. The difference is not in the mode of discourse and clear presentation, but the deep knowledge shown of the prevailing conditions and psychology of the people addressed and how such discourse appeals to the hearts.

The son invites his father to Islam:

"And make mention (O Muhammad) in the book of Ibrahim. Truly, he was a saint, a Prophet. When he said to his father: 'O my father! Why do you worship that which does not hear nor see, nor can in any way avail you? O my father! Lo! there has come to me of knowledge that which did not come to you. So follow me, and I will lead you on a right path. O my father! Do not serve the *shaytan*. Truly, the *shaytan* is a rebel to the All Merciful. O my father! I fear that a punishment from the All Merciful will overtake you so that you become a comrade of the *shaytan*.'"
(Qur'an, *Maryam:* 41-45)

Paternal affection has been aroused in these *ayat*. Think over the repeated address: **"O my father!"** It shows obedi-

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

ence, love and humility. It requires an aesthetic taste to understand the eloquence of this address. Those who have a deep knowledge of the language of the glorious Qur'an can really enjoy the spirit of this mode of address. It has been said that when such persons recite any *ayah* which delineates the punishment of Allah, their voices tremble and their faces redden with fear. When however they recite any *ayah* regarding Allah's pardon and mercy, their hearts melt and their voices show mildness and the warmth of love.

When a son addresses his father thus: **"O my father"**, he arouses his paternal affection. If he had said the same thing with the voice of a preacher, he would have said, "Exalted Sir! hear me, or O reverend priest! think it over." It would have then given an altogether different impression. But he said: **"O my father"**. He adopted this mode intentionally so that his words might touch a sympathetic chord and arouse paternal affection, and thus open the way to his father's heart. When a son addresses his father in this manner, however angry the father may be, his heart melts and he is inclined to hear what the son has to say. The prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, touched the sympathetic chord in his heart before he discoursed. Because it has been seen that sometimes affection finds a place in the heart before faith finds acceptance with the person addressed. It is also possible that a father may be affectionate but may not be a believer. If he is to be invited to true faith then one has to enter through the door which is open.

One who is inviting to the 'way of Allah' who is blessed with 'wisdom' (*hikmah*) cannot lose sight of this aspect. If he does so, it may be harmful to him and his cause. If, however, he is bad-tempered he cannot succeed in his mission.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

" ...if then (O Muhammad) you had been stern and fierce of heart they (the Companions) would have dispersed from around about you." (Qur'an, *Ali-ʿImran:* 159)

When the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, addressed his uncle Abu Talib, at a very critical juncture, he addressed him as "Dear Uncle". It was at a time when Abu Talib was afraid of a boycott by Quraysh.

> "Dear Uncle! If they place the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left and ask me to abandon this mission, still I will not give it up. I will continue to work for it until Allah makes it prevail or I sacrifice my life for it."

The result of these soft-spoken words was that the natural emotion of sympathy and affection was aroused and, though Abu Talib remained attached to his ancestral religion, he said: "O my son! continue with your mission and do what you like. I will not hand you over to anybody."

The Prophet Ibrahim's Invitation to His Father

While speaking to his father the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did not take to logic nor speak in the high-flown language meant only for the intelligentsia. He began his talk in the language used in common parlance which could be understood by any man with common sense. He said, "My father! Why worship an idol which does not hear, see nor can it be of any help to you. I have been revealed the truth of which you have no knowledge." It is also a matter of pleasure for a father that his son should excel him in knowledge and intelligence. That is not surprising. It has sometimes been found that the father is illiterate and the son becomes a learned and proficient man.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said to his father, **"O my father! I have been revealed the Truth of which you have no knowledge, so follow me. I will guide you to the right path. O my father! Do not worship the *shaytan*. The *shaytan* is disobedient to Allah."** Each and every word in this *ayah* has a depth of meaning in it and is a treasure of wisdom. He spoke to him in a simple language because his father was a simple-minded sculptor. It was no use talking to him in a sophisticated way. He just said, **"The *shaytan* is disobedient and I fear that you may be taken as a follower of the *shaytan* and the punishment of Allah may strike you."**

The Prophet Ibrahim Invites His People to Islam

The way the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, invited his people to Islam is entirely different from the way he invited his father.

> **"Recite to them the story of Ibrahim when he said to his father and his folk: 'What do you worship?' They said: 'We worship idols, and are ever devoted to them.' He said: 'Do they hear you when you cry? or do they benefit or harm you?'"**
> (Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara:* 69-73)

Think over these verses and the sagacity and farsightedness with which the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, spoke to his people. He did not speak ill of their idols. If he had done so they would not have given ear to him. He did not say anything on his own but forced them to admit:

> **"'We worship idols, and are devoted to them,' He said: 'Do they hear you when you cry? Or do they benefit or harm you?'"**

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did not employ logic nor did he philosophise with them. He put the simple question: **"When you call them, do they hear you and benefit or harm you?"** It is because human life requires something to fall back on when in distress. When a person is called by anybody he may hear him. The caller has a hope of some benefit or fears some harm from the person addressed. These are the two links from which human life is never unshackled – the hope of gain or fear of loss – in fact the entire life revolves around these two human emotions. They said: "It is not that they benefit or harm us but"

"We found our fathers acting in this way."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuʿara:* 74)

It was what the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, wanted them to come out with. They had no answer and they admitted their ignorance and helplessness. What relation did these humanly-sculpted idols have with human life and what could they do for human beings when they were themselves helpless? Is there any truth based on logic and knowledge behind them?

Read these *ayat* again and again and you will feel that a world of meaning lies hidden in them. One interpretation leads to another and you will realise the difference between his way of conveying the truth to his father, and to his people. Allah had granted him a deep insight into human psychology. He had the skill to awaken the latent powers of the heart and mind. How he made his people confess what was lying hidden at the back of their minds! Their intelligence, power of argumentation and defensive capabilities were laid bare when they said:

"We found our fathers acting in this way."

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The last arrow in their quiver was used and they had nothing more to add. Then he started to acquaint them with *tawhid*, the unity of Allah:

"He said: 'See how that which you worship, you and your fathers, truly, they are (all) an enemy to me, save the Lord of the worlds, Who created me, and guides me. And Who feeds me and waters me. And when I sicken then He heals me. And Who causes me to die, then gives me life (again). And Who, I ardently hope, will forgive me on the Day of Judgement.'"
(Qur'an, *ash-Shu'ara:* 75-82)

The Irrefutable Logic of the Glorious Qur'an

There is a unique and interesting point in the Glorious Qur'an towards which Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah has invited the attention of his readers. He said:

"When the Greek philosophers defined the attributes of Allah (Whom they called *Wajib al-Wujud* or The First Cause or The Prime Mover in philosophical language) they gave those attributes in detail which, according to them, are unbecoming of Allah, i.e. He is not so or, that is, He is free from such and such limitations. But when they spoke about positive attributes, then they described those briefly (i.e. He is so and so or such and such). But against this there are details of positive attributes and brevity in the description of negative features in the Glorious Qur'an. This is a common feature in the teachings of the prophets, peace be upon them all, and in the revealed religions which affirm positive qualities in detail and abridge the negative points. Allah says:

'He is Allah, besides Whom there is no god but

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Him, the Knower of the invisible and the visible. He is the All Merciful, the Compassionate. He is Allah, the One Whom there is no god but Him, the King, the Holy One, Peace, the Keeper of Faith, the Guardian, the Majestic, the Compeller, the Superb. Glorious is Allah from all that they ascribe as partners (unto Him)! He is Allah the Creator, the Shaper out of naught, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.'"
(Qur'an, *al-Hashr:* 22-24)

Ibn Taymiyyah rightly says that negative qualities may be in hundreds, but they do not have the same impact on the mind as one positive attribute does. It is also a fact that human life is more dependent on positive qualities than upon negative ones. Negation of anything has very little part to play in human life and civilisation.

Vigorous Remembrance of Allah

When the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, heard their reply: "**We worship idols and are ever devoted to them**", he retorted, "**Do they hear you when you cry? Or do they benefit or harm you?**" This is an example of abridged negation. When he spoke about the positive attributes of Allah he became eloquent. The Noble Qur'an has reproduced his speech in these words:

"Truly, they are (all) an enemy to me save the Lord of the worlds, Who created me and guides me. And Who feeds me and waters me and when I sicken, then He heals me and Who causes me to die, then gives me life (again) and Who, I ardently hope, will forgive me my sins on the Day

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

of Judgement."
(Qur'an, *Ash-Shuᶜara:* 77-82)

Ibrahim has mentioned five attributes of Allah in these noble *ayat* (creation, guidance, sustenance, healing and power over death and life). But when he questioned them about idols, he enquired about just two qualities: '**Do they hear your prayers and do they have power to benefit or harm you?**' It appears that when he mentioned the name of Allah, his soul was inspired and enraptured, and he extolled the virtues of Allah with exaltation. It is also natural that when a person likes anything, for example, something edible, he wants to keep it in his mouth for a longer time and relish its taste. On the other hand, if he has to take anything bitter he tries to swallow it at a gulp.

He, therefore, spoke with warmth and cheer about Allah. He said: **"The Lord of the worlds. He created me, guides me, feeds me: when I fall ill, He heals me; He will make me die and resurrect me, and I hope He will forgive my sins on the Day of Judgement."**

It seems he was not satisfied with it. His heart was filled with joy and a prayer gushed from the depth of his heart:

"My Lord! Give me wisdom and unite me to the right-acting ones. And give me a good report in later generations. And place me among the inheritors of the Garden of Delight."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara:* 83-85)

His thoughts turned towards his father who was the finest of the idolaters and their leader, for he said:

"And forgive my father, surely he is one of those astray, and do not disgrace me on the day they

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

are resurrected, the day when wealth and children will not benefit, except for whoever comes to his Lord with a sound heart."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuʿara:* 87-89)

These *ayat* make it clear why Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was elevated to the position of being an intimate friend of Allah.

"Truly, Ibrahim was a model devoutly obedient to Allah, by nature upright and he was not of the idolaters! Thankful for His bounties; He chose him and He guided him to a straight path. And We gave him good in the world and in the Hereafter; and he is among the right-acting. "
(Qur'an, *an-Nahl* 120-122)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The Way of the Prophet Yusuf

This chapter is yet another example of inviting to 'the way of Allah'. In the previous two chapters we found two different methods adopted by the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him – the one when he presented Islam to his father, which has been related in *Surah Maryam*, and the other when he addressed both his father and his people which has been detailed in *Surah ash-Shuʿara*.

We now present the method of invitation used by the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. The relevant *ayat* are:

"And two young men went to prison with him. One of them said: 'I dreamt that I was pressing wine.' The other said: 'I dreamt that I was carrying upon my head bread from which the birds were eating. Tell us the interpretation, for we see you of those who do good.' He said: 'The food which you are given (daily) shall not come to you but I shall tell you the interpretation before it comes to you. This is of that which my Lord has taught me. Truly, I have forsaken the religion of folk who don't believe in Allah and are disbelievers in the Hereafter. And I follow the religion of my fathers, Ibrahim and Ishaq and Yaʿqub. It never was for us to attribute anything as partner to Allah. This is of the bounty

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

of Allah to us (the seed of Ibrahim) and to mankind; but most men do not give thanks. O my two fellow prisoners! Are many lords better, or Allah the One, the Almighty? Those whom you worship besides Him are but names which you have named, you and your fathers. Allah has revealed no sanction for them. The decision rests with Allah only, Who has commanded you that you worship none save Him. This is the right religion, but most men know not. O my two fellow prisoners! As for one of you, he will pour out wine for his lord to drink; and as for the other he will be crucified so that the birds will eat from his head. This is the case judged concerning which you inquired.'"
(Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 36-41)

The Unusual Circumstances

Before I elucidate the meaning of these noble *ayat*, I want you to visualise the unusual environment in which the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, had to carry out his mission. First of all, think for a while about who the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was. He was the son of the Prophet Ya'qub, and grandson of the Prophet Ishaq and great-grandson of the Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon them all, – eminent in lineage, a prophet by heredity, noble in disposition, excellent in morals and manners, mentioned in revealed books, narrated in religious, literary and philosophical works and matchless in beauty.

Then go through the following *ayat*, before enjoying the literary excellence of these *ayat*:

"And there came a caravan, and they sent their waterdrawer. He let down his pail (in the pit)."
(Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 19)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"And it seemed good to them (the menfolk) after they had seen the signs (of his innocence) to imprison him for a time."
(Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 35)

The Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was imprisoned on a charge from which he had been acquitted. His innocence was as much established by Allah as was the wolf free from the guilt of killing him (an Arabic proverb).

Anyway, the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was sent to jail as a convict on a false charge. The prison staff had to carry out the orders of the higher authorities. They were not concerned with the facts of the case. They treated the inmates as chattels. They were not aware of the status of the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, the family he belonged to or the noble character he bore. The atmosphere in prison is different from the outside world and the inmates had a lot of time at their disposal.

Though all the prisoners were treated as equals, the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, became the centre of attention – other prisoners being impressed by his character. Perhaps the fellow prisoners were attracted towards him on account of his devotion to prayers, dignified manners, strength of character, and broadmindedness. They were obliged to respect him for his sterling qualities of head and heart. It was all in accordance with the will of Allah.

The two prisoners had dreams which is nothing unusual, but their dreams were a bit strange. One of them dreamt that he was extracting wine (from grapes). He did not know what the dream meant and fear caught him as if it were a nightmare. The other man dreamt that he was carrying bread in a basket over his head and the birds were eating from it. It was also a strange dream. They

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

referred their dreams to the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. It shows that their instinct had not become dull. They had the faculty of observation and it is a common practice that people judge by their own experiences rather than depending on logic and reason. They told their dreams to the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, and asked him for their interpretations saying, **"We see you (to be one) of those who act excellently well."**

The Meaning of 'Ihsan'

The two prisoners who asked for interpretation of their dreams said:

> **"... for we see you (to be one)of those who act excellently well."**

Ihsan thus signifies doing anything in a manner which is the highest degree of perfection.

When asked about *Ihsan* the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

> "*Ihsan* is that you worship Allah as if you see Him, because if you do not see Him, then He sees you."

Ihsan here means that the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was perfect in every way. Because he was accused of an offense (which he did not commit) there must have been some talk about it in the prison. His co-prisoners must have thought at first that there must be some truth in the charge or else he would not have been in prison. Others might have said that the charge was false. But all this loose talk ended in the prison when they saw him at close quarters and experienced his perfect manners and excellent disposition. The aura of guilt which preceded his coming to the prison disappeared and the prisoners instead saw a halo of glory around him.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

A Thought-provoking Matter

The Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, realised that the frightening dreams had brought these persons to him since they considered such matters important in their time. They gave great importance to such incidents and prognostications and placed implicit faith in them.

But the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was brought up in the lap of prophethood, endowed with a rare insight and moulded for prophethood; he understood that these two prisoners were forgetting the grave realities which needed more attention than these dreams. He knew that the present life, however long it may be, is, in fact, no better than a dream. These two prisoners were more in need of knowing the interpretation of the reality of life and death since their forgetfulness of Allah laid them open to a more serious loss and danger. Yusuf, peace be upon him, who was blessed with sympathy for people and had their welfare at heart, knew that it was more important to warn them about the real danger to come. They ought to be told about the thing which was more profitable to them, especially when they had experienced a shock and were mentally prepared to heed his advice. He had now an opportunity to tell them what he wanted; there probably would be no other occasion. Yusuf, peace be upon him, thought it better not to lose that chance as the interpretation of dreams had presented him with an opportunity to invite them to the way of Allah. He thought that their natural sense of reason ought to be awakened so that they might grasp the meaning of *tawhid*, the easy and natural belief in One God.

A Good Way to Introduce the Subject

The intelligent way in which the talk was initiated needs to be understood. It has its own importance. The way in which a magnificent building needs a befitting gate so that

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

the person entering it may know the grandeur of the building, Yusuf, peace be upon him, broached the subject in a fine and befitting manner. First, he assured them that he would interpret the dreams for which they were so anxious. They had come to the right person and they had not made a mistake in coming to him.

It is natural that the person in need wants his need to be fulfilled as early as possible. If a patient goes to a physician he wants his disease to be diagnosed and the medicine prescribed for him. If the physician dilly-dallies or refers to his books or if he says he will refer the matter to such and such a person, the patient will lose heart and turn back dejected. It is, therefore, necessary that confidence should be created in the mind of the person in need. That is why Yusuf, peace be upon him, told the prisoners:

> **"The food which you are given (daily) shall not come to you but I shall tell you the interpretation before it comes to you."**
> (Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 37)

It is evident that it was not possible for the prisoners to stay for long with the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, and hence they needed this assurance. As I understand this *ayah*, the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, told his companions: "I will tell you the interpretation before your food is brought and you will be satisfied. There will be no delay, no occasion for the 'warder' to reprimand you and send you back to your cells." Egypt was a civilised country in those days and maybe the time to serve food in the prison was also fixed.

The Mention of Something Pleasant Brings Cheer

The mere mention of food was pleasing to the prisoners. That is why Yusuf, peace be upon him, created cheer-

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

fulness in their minds by mentining it first. They were now in a cheerful mood and inclined to hear more from him.

The temperament of Yusuf, peace be upon him, is noteworthy for us here. He does not take any credit for interpretation of dreams and calls it a gift of Allah. It is difficult to find a parallel for the intelligent digression in his speech:

"This is of that which my Lord has taught me." (Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 37)

"It is one of the subjects which has been taught to me by Allah" and now he has the opportunity to speak about the advice he wanted to give them.

Think it over. Before he interpreted the dreams he very intelligently discharged the task of conveying the truth. If he had started preaching straight away without the little digression in his talk, the prisoners would not have been in the right frame of mind to hear him because they had been frightened by their dreadful dreams. They wanted somebody to tell them something to raise their spirits. But Yusuf, peace be upon him, told them that the interpretation of dreams did not depend on his own knowledge or intelligence. It was a favour bestowed by Allah. Thus he had the opportunity to convey the truth and he did it in such a subtle manner that nobody could deny the wisdom of it.

Think over this judicious way of conveying the truth. If the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, had said: "My friends, please wait. I will interpret the dreams. But there is another matter which is more important and worthy of serious thought," they would obviously not hear him with

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

patience, specially on a subject with which they were not conversant. They had not gone to him to hear all these sermons.

He Turned to 'Invitation' in an Agreeable Manner

"This is of that which my Lord has taught me." (Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 37)

Now keep in mind the environment in which this 'invitation' had been given. If there is another example of this astute method, it is to be found in the *da'wah* of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which will be mentioned later on. I cannot find such a subtle situation in the long history of men inviting their people to Allah nor can I find such a subtle way in which the subject was introduced. Read again the *ayat* from:

"He said: 'The food which you are given ...' up to '...this is of that which my Lord has taught me.'

You will see how he opened the way to discourse on *tawhid*. Can there be any other simpler, milder and more acceptable way than this? Then look at the manner in which he broached the subject. He was in other words saying: "I do not have the ability to interpret the dreams. I am a weak and helpless person. I have been thrown in prison and I was unable to prevent it. How is it possible for such a helpless person to talk about such subjects? It is only the kindness of Allah that He has blessed me with the art of interpreting dreams."

He Covered a Long Way in an Instant

A question arises here. Why did Allah bless him with the knowledge of interpreting dreams? It was one more

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

method of inviting the attention of the people to the way of Allah. In fact, the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, covered a long distance in the twinkling of an eye through his gifted insight, spirituality and enlightenment, a distance which philosophers would have taken years to cover. He said:

> **"This is of that which my Lord has taught me. Truly, I have forsaken the religion of folk who don't believe in Allah and are disbelievers in the Hereafter."**
> (Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 37)

Having said so, he thought he was in a better position to convey the truth, as though he were on the top of a mountain addressing the people down below:

> **"O my two fellow prisoners! Are many lords better or Allah, the One, the Almighty?"**
> (Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 39)

If Yusuf, peace be upon him, had said this earlier it would have been hard for his listeners and they would not have accepted it. But now was the opportunity to say: **"O my fellow prisoners! Are many lords better or Allah, the One, the Almighty?"**

The priority that the subject is given in the Glorious Qur'an is worth considering here. If Yusuf, peace be upon him, had continued the earlier talk, it would have appeared dry and lifeless. But he realised from their countenances that they were prepared to hear the divine message. He said:

> **"O my fellow prisoners! Are many lords better or Allah, the One, the Almighty?"**
> (Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 39)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Note here the tone also. This is different from the earlier one in which he had said:

"This is of that which my Lord has taught me."
(Surah, *Yusuf:* 37)

The tone was then soft and mild. But the tone in which he says: **"Are many lords better or Allah, the One, the Almighty?"** shows strength and confidence. It was the confident tone and mode of expression which they could easily understand. If Yusuf, peace be upon him, had employed logic and reason they would not have understood a word of it.

A Miracle of the Glorious Qur'an
Then he said:

"Those whom you worship besides Him are but names which you have named, you and your fathers. Allah has revealed no sanction for them."
(Qur'an, *Yusuf:* 40)

These were mere names without any substance behind them; these were names which had no truth.

The Greeks invented some names and some names have been adopted by idol worshippers. Other nations have also sculpted their idols from their imaginations and given them certain names. This is the miracle of the Glorious Qur'an that it has used the term 'names' for these imaginary beings who do not exist. Those who have studied the history of different religions and their mythologies will appreciate the significance of this miraculous expression. All mythological figures are just names, no matter when and where these so called gods have existed – the rain gods,

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

war gods, gods of love, etc. Did they ever exist outside the imaginations of people?

Yusuf, peace be upon him, realised that the prisoners were now in a receptive mood and therefore the talk need not be lengthened and the discussion of *tawhid* not elaborated further. An expert physician knows how much medicine and nourishment is required by a particular patient. Likewise one who invites to Allah, who is divinely inspired and who has expertise in the art of calling people to the way of Allah, knows the psychological moment when he must put his message across and when not to lose any more time in doing so. That is the reason why the one who calls to the way of Allah who fetters his calling by set rules and regulations makes his task difficult. Inviting others to the way of Allah needs a cheerful disposition, enthusiasm and warmth. It would really be tyrannical to bind the one who calls people to Allah with hard and fast rules.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The Way of the Prophet Musa

The ways which the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, employed in calling people to the way of Allah were different from those which have been presented so far and which will be presented later on. They were different on three counts: the temper and position of the one who called, and the people to whom the message was addressed.

The task of conveying the truth which was entrusted to Musa, peace be upon him, was a bit different though it contained the basic and central elements of the invitation. That is: the 'Way of Allah'; *tawhid*; belief in the Hereafter, Resurrection and life after death (in the Hereafter); the attributes of Allah; and invitation to believe in the unseen. It was also different from another angle. Besides the basic and central subjects of discourse an additional responsibility was entrusted to him; it was to rescue Bani Isra'il from the tyranny of Fir'awn and the miseries they were subjected to on account of their faith.

The Mission of the Prophet Musa was Different

The unusual circumstances in which Musa, peace be upon him, was born and brought up and the difficult conditions he was confronted with are factors which go to make his mission different from those of other prophets. He was also entrusted with the task of telling Fir'awn in plain

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

terms that he was a tyrant and despot, and that he was oppressing Bani Isra'il. Bani Isra'il were the descendants of prophets and their ancestors had been true believers in Allah and in *tawhid* (Oneness of Allah). It was not a matter of any particular nation or group because such groups have always existed in the world and they can still be found. Had it been the matter of a group or clan whom a tyrant had enslaved and was oppressing and who were suffering on account of their beliefs, then it would have been of no special significance. This has happened at all times and we can find many such examples in every period of history. It is also not beyond our imagination that such groups of people will exist in the future also.

The Different Position of Bani Isra'il

In spite of their laxity in observation of religious duties, lack of morality and certain other weaknesses, Bani Isra'il was a community which was then a custodian of *tawhid*. History provides evidence that in spite of their weaknesses they had retained their belief in Allah. This was a time when few people knew anything about *tawhid*. The exegetes of the Qur'an have mentioned that this was the only reason for their superiority over other communities. They had kept the torch of *tawhid* alight in the prevailing darkness of polytheism and idol-worship.

It was not just that Bani Isra'il were subjected to iniquities at the hands of Fir'awn and were living at the mercy of a tyrant and autocrat; they were also custodians of *tawhid* and trustees of the legacy of prophethood. They were at that time bearers of that trust which was the sum total of the teachings of earlier prophets.

The Dual Responsibility of the Prophet Musa

There was a specific difference between the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and other prophets because he

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

had a dual responsibility: to carry the message of truth and invite the attention of Fir'awn towards Allah – the One, the Almighty and tell him that He has no partner in sovereignty and is the only Law-Giver; and to liberate Bani Isra'il from their serfdom.

"So go to him and say: 'Truly, we are two messenger of your Lord. So let the Children of Isra'il go with us, and torment them not. We bring you a token from your Lord. And peace will be for him who follows right guidance.'"
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 47)

This is the aspect of the mission of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, which differentiates him from others. But his position was delicate, as his life and the trials and tribulations through which he had to pass were different from those of other prophets.

The Planning of Fir'awn

Musa, peace be upon him, was born in very difficult and insufferable circumstances. Fir'awn had directed his agents or police not to leave any newborn Isra'ilite baby alive:

"Truly, Fir'awn exalted himself in the land and made its people castes. A tribe among them he oppressed, killing their sons and sparing their women. Lo! he was of those who work corruption."
(Qur'an, *al-Qasas*: 4)

Fir'awn had devised his plan with great care – the way so-called advanced countries formulate their plans today. It was that no Israelite male child should be left alive. If a generation of male children were done away with in this

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

manner, there would be no fear (of an uprising) from Bani Isra'il as women folk would alone be left alive and no harm would come from them. "The male child shall be killed and the female child left alone." Like an autocrat, he issued this directive against which there was no appeal. But the will of Allah was that a great person should be born among the Israelites. Fir'awn wanted to get rid of the Israelites by not allowing any male child to remain alive who could destroy his kingdom. But Omnipotent Allah caused all his plans to come to nothing. Allah allowed Musa, peace be upon him, to live. Although it was for his sake that innocent children were being killed by Fir'awn the baby, of which Pharaoh was afraid, was born and grew up. How he was saved and brought up is one of the wonders of human history. It is a miracle of the power of Allah that he was reared in the lap of his sworn enemy – Fir'awn.

The Supernatural Environment

Keep in your mind's eye the circumstances prevailing at the time, of which each and every aspect is an evidence of the working of the super-natural power of Allah – a fact evident from beginning to end.

"And the family of Fir'awn took him up, that he might become for them an enemy and a sorrow. Truly, Fir'awn and Haman and their hosts were ever wrongdoing. And the wife of Fir'awn said: '(He will be) a consolation for me and for you. Don't kill him. Perhaps he may be of benefit to us, or we may choose him for a son', and they did not perceive. And the heart of the Musa's mother became void, and she would have betrayed him if We had not comforted her heart, that she might be of the believers. And she said to his sister: 'Trace him,' so she observed him from afar, and they did not perceive.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

And We had beforehand forbidden foster-mothers for him, so she said: 'Shall I show you a household who will rear him for you and take care of him.' So We restored him to his mother that she might be comforted and not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true. But most of them know not."
(Qur'an, *al-Qasas:* 8-13)

The Prophet Musa (AS) having been brought up in the palace of Fir'awn left it stealthily after accidentally killing a member of Fir'awn's people.

"And he entered the city at a time of carelessness of its folk, and he found therein two men fighting, one of his own caste and the other of his enemies; and he who was of his caste asked him for help against him who was of his enemies. So Musa struck him with his fist and killed him. He said: 'This is of *shaytan's* doing. Truly, he is an enemy, a clear misleader.'"
(Qur'an *al-Qasas:* 15)

It was a clear miracle and the most bright and shining example of the signs of Allah that a person was chosen for conveying the truth and for the liberation of Bani Isra'il whose position amongst them had been rendered most precarious.

The Strivings of the Powers of Faith and Heart

Musa, peace be upon him, whose description has been given in *Surah al-Qasas* in detail and in some other chapters in brief, was enjoined with the task of 'inviting' the people to the way of Allah and, in addition, the liberation of Bani Isra'il. Both these tasks needed a lot of effort and striving. The job of conveying the truth requires hard work,

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

immense faith and reliance on Allah; and the liberation of a community is not easy either. It also demands a hard struggle. Musa, peace be upon him, was a bit hesitant on account of these difficult tasks which were entrusted him. The Glorious Qur'an has also mentioned the mental attitude of Musa in his own words:

"And they have a charge against me, so I fear that they will kill me."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara*: 14)

Firᶜawn also reminds him of the same incident:

"And you did that deed which you did, and you were one of the ungrateful ones."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara:* 19)

This fear had created hesitancy in the mind of Musa, peace be upon him. But Allah had chosen him for both these onerous tasks because there was no better and more suitable person than him.

The Glorious Qur'an has described very clearly how a messenger of Allah, a wise teacher, aware of the complexity of the problem, presents his message with dignity and with zeal for the faith. Musa, peace be upon him, was a true prophet and an exemplar for his entire Ummah. The way the prophets teach shows that they are the elect of Allah chosen for the service of His way. Their mode of talk and way of address is different from those professionals who become obsequious and compliant.

The Most Beloved Person Goes to the Most Detestable

It is worth noting here that Allah bestowed prophethood on Musa, peace be upon him, and thus he became a

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

beloved person and a true prophet. But where and to whom was he being sent? To his enemy and the enemy of Allah. The most beloved person was being sent to the most hated man – both stood poles apart having divergent views. We would not find anywhere else such a wide difference between persons as we find here. The most senior messenger of his time was being sent to a person who had challenged Divine Power. Fir'awn had challenged the Might of Allah and he had become so audacious that he had made the claim:

"I (Fir'awn) am your lord, the highest."

Musa, peace be upon him, was sent to a person who was not only an infidel, but who had claimed Godhood, who was a wrongdoer and an accursed man. The most beloved person was being sent to such a hated man and he was advised:

"And speak to him a gentle word that perhaps he may heed or fear."
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 44)

Is any harshness or sourness visible in this advice? There could be no excuse because it was difficult for anybody to outdo Fir'awn in disobedience and insolence, as he had said, **"I am your lord, the highest."** But when an occasion arose to send a Messenger to him, Allah advised Musa to use a mild tone. When Musa was commanded to go along with Harun, peace be upon them both, to the court of Fir'awn and declare the truth, they said:

"Our Lord, we fear that he may be beforehand with us or that he may play the tyrant."
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 45)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Because there was a mark against Musa, peace be upon him, which created some anxiety in him, Allah said to him:

"Fear not, I am with you both, I hear and I see. So go to him and say: 'We are two messengers of your Lord. So let the Children of Isra'el go with us, and do not torment them. We bring you a sign from your Lord. And peace will be for him who follows the guidance. It has been revealed to us that the punishment will be for him who denies and turns away.' He (Fir'awn) said: 'Who then is the Lord of you two, Musa?' He said: 'Our Lord is He Who gave everything its nature, then guided it aright.'"
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha* : 46-50)

The Poisonous Arrow of Fir'awn

The mind of Fir'awn started working fast and he took out such a poisonous arrow from his quiver which never misses – an arrow which, if aimed at the most intelligent and experienced public speaker, would have its desired effect. The public speaker may be an accomplished scholar, he might have studied the art of discourse or be an expert in psychology, sociology or logical disputation, but he is certain to be hit by this arrow. Fir'awn asked:

"What then is the state of the generations of old?"
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 51)

It was an uncommon question of his cunning mind and showed the perverse intelligence of Fir'awn. He wanted to inflame the sentiments of the courtiers against Musa and thus get rid of him. He wanted to kill two birds with one stone. One: that he might sidetrack the call to *tawhid* because it was ruinous for him. Faith in Allah touches the

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

heartstrings of man, and the dormant *iman* which is lying hidden in the nature of man comes to the fore. The courtiers were after all men; some of them must have been intelligent and maybe some of them were those whose conscience had not died. It was possible that the call to *tawhid* might stir up their sense of *iman*. Fir'awn, therefore, tried to evade the issue. He was very afraid of *tawhid*. He, therefore, posed this question so that his courtiers might become cautious and realise that Musa, peace be upon him, wanted to turn them away from the path of their forefathers. That is why he asked:

"What then is the state of the generations of old?"
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 51)

There were just two alternatives for Musa, peace be upon him. He could have said in plain terms without any sophistication that "they are in Hell":

"Truly, you (idolaters) and that which you worship beside Allah are fuel for hell. Thereunto you will come."
(Qur'an, *al-Anbiya:* 98)

If he had said that, the door for further talks would have been closed. The courtiers would have flared up and either they would have walked out or manhandled the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, in a fit of rage, saying: "You are insulting our forefathers."

The Prophetic Wisdom and a Miracle

The other alternative would have been for Musa, peace be upon him, to keep quiet or be cunning and say that so far as their ancestors were concerned they were learned and great men and he holds them in high respect. Then

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Fir'awn would have reason to say that if they were learned, great and respectable then their beliefs were the same as were theirs:

"He (Fir'awn) said: 'What then is the state of the generations of old?' He (Musa) said: 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record. My Lord, neither errs nor forgets.'"
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 51-52)

Musa, peace be upon him, again reverted to the main subject which was under discussion earlier. It was possible that he might have said that history would provide information about them. If he had said that, the topic would have changed. Fir'awn would have had the opportunity to dilate upon fictitious stories circulated as historical facts and argued on their basis. But the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, gave a reply for which there was no answer:

"He said, 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord...'"
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 52)

Now consider the simplicity and profundity of the words. What he wanted to say he expressed in a few words. This is prophetic wisdom and a miracle of inviting to the way of Allah. If we are confronted with such a situation we may find a hundred and one ways to express ourselves and try to wriggle out of a difficult situation. We can say: "It is another matter", or "I am concerned with the present time and not with the past", etc.

Firmness in Conveying the Truth

Musa, peace be upon him, did not digress from conveying the truth and he did not give up the initiative which was in his hands but he reverted immediately to the main

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

subject. We cannot imagine the speed and grace with which he turned back and took the wise step which has no parallel elsewhere. He solved the entire problem in a few words, and immediately returned to the main theme, **"The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record. My Lord neither errs nor forgets."** This did not allow the continuity of the talk to be broken. He described such attributes of Allah which Fir'awn wanted to avoid by changing the subject.

> **"He (Musa) said: 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record. My Lord neither errs nor forgets, the One Who has appointed the earth as a bed and has threaded roads for you therein and has sent down water from the sky and thereby We have brought forth diverse kinds of vegetation (saying): Eat! and feed your cattle! Lo! herein are signs for men of thought.'"**
> (Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 52-54)

The Change in Stratagem by Fir'awn

We find another example of it in *Surah ash-Shu'ara*:

> **"Fir'awn said: 'And what is the Lord of the Worlds?' He (Musa) said: 'Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, if you had but sure belief.' He (Fir'awn) said to those around him: 'Do you not hear?' He (Musa) said: 'Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers.' (Fir'awn) said: 'Lo! Your messenger who has been sent to you is indeed a madman!'"**
> (Qur'an, *ash-Shu'ara:* 23-27)

This was the stratagem of Fir'awn and a clever attempt to change the course of talks. He wanted to divert the attention of his courtiers from the main topic with his exu-

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

berant talk and knowledge of human psychology (which a ruler acquires through experience) and political manoeuvring in order to deal with the Prophet Musa. But Musa, peace be upon him, was not prepared to budge from the main subject. Fir'awn said: **"What is the Lord of the Worlds?"** He wanted Musa to change the course of the talk and open the way for debate. But Musa, peace be upon him, stressed Fir'awn's weakest point and said: **"Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, if you had but sure belief."** It meant that Fir'awn's throne had no legs to stand upon. But he did not say so and confined himself to **"Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them"** adding **"if you had but sure belief"** – thus challenging him and stressing his real malady **"if you had but sure belief"**. He wanted to stress that Fir'awn was devoid of *iman*. He wanted to say that if he had 'faith' he would see that the Lord of the worlds is One, **"the Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them"**.

The Last Arrow of Fir'awn

Fir'awn had just one way of stopping Musa, peace be upon him, from inviting to the way of Allah and from inciting his courtiers against him. The Glorious Qur'an has described it in various ways. (Fir'awn) said to those around him:

"Do you not hear?"
(Qur'an, *ash-Shu'ara:* 25)

"Did you not hear, what he said? Do you not feel ashamed? Does your sense of honour not become excited? Do you not have the courage to rejoin on my behalf and stop him?" But before they could become excited and speak, Musa, peace be upon him, completed his words:

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"He (Musa) said: 'Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers.'"
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara:* 26)

Firᶜawn once again tried to laugh and to pour scorn so he said:

"Lo! Your messenger who has been sent to you is indeed a madman."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara:* 27)

Firᶜawn knew the human weakness that if somebody is attacked he becomes enraged. He cannot swallow an insult. The Glorious Qur'an graphically describes the entire environment and debate in such a manner that we can almost see and hear it. Firᶜawn thought that Musa, peace be upon him, would lose his temper and say: "Am I mad? Then call a physician and get me examined by an expert." This was the purpose when Firᶜawn imputed madness to him. Musa, peace be upon him, only ignored it and, continuing his talk, said:

"Lord of the East and the West and all that is between them, if you did but understand."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara:* 28)

He did not say anything about his own self nor defend himself. He was a true Messenger of Allah for he was only enjoined with the task of inviting them to the way of Allah. He was not to be carried away by personal attacks. These aspersions were immaterial in comparison with the noble task of calling to the truth in an environment where polytheism was widespread; where idol-worship was prevalent; where crimes and wrong actions were common; where innocent children were being killed. He therefore did not pay heed to these personal jibes and said:

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"Lord of the East and the West and all that is between them."
and added:
"If you did but understand."

This small sentence pierced Fir'awn's heart. He thought himself to be the 'lord, the highest'. He had the wrong notion that the world comprised Egypt and, because he ruled over it, he thought the whole world was under his thumb.

When Musa, peace be upon him, talked about the East and the West and all that lies between them, he actually challenged Fir'awn's vainglory of sovereignty and demolished the foundation of his false godhood of which he was very proud.

This was an example of prophetic wisdom and 'invitation' in which the position of the one who invited to the way of Allah and the people to whom the 'invitation' had been given were quite different. The subject of the 'invitation' was delicate and complicated and the position of the 'inviter' was critical and insecure and the one to whom this 'invitation' was being given was an autocratic ruler. That is why this particular example deserves our special attention. We can take a lesson and receive valuable guidance in formulating and preparing a practical plan for shaping our ideas of conveying the truth.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Musa and Bani Isra'il

Domestic strife is sometimes more dangerous than external aggression. When a family or community is involved in internecine feuds it affects the hearts and minds of the people and it becomes more difficult to fence it in than to fence out an external aggressor. What was the stand of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, in respect of his own people, Bani Isra'il?

The Fourfold Stand of Musa

It is pertinent to ask here: what was the stand of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, as one who called to the way of Allah and as a reformer, in respect of Bani Isra'il? The answer which the Glorious Qur'an gives is that he did take a stand vis-a-vis Bani Isra'il. We can draw useful conclusions by that study and gain knowledge of the principles of inviting to the way of Allah; how we should address members of our family or community and what should be our mode of address if we have occasion to address an enemy. It will also be clear from this study that one who calls to the way of Allah is such first and last; whether he is addressing close relations or an enemy, the idea of inviting to the way of Allah is uppermost in his mind – whatever the conditions and whoever he addresses. The purpose of inviting to the way of Allah will always be before him and whatever he may say, the aim will be how he can convince the addressee and prepare him to accept the

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

truth? He will not touch any point which would jeopardise his mission.

The mission which was entrusted to Musa, peace be upon him, was of a special nature because of the peculiar conditions prevailing at that time and the circumstances in which he was born and brought up.

The Difference Between Prophethood and Political Leadership

There are chances of misunderstanding the second mission of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, i.e. to free Bani Isra'il. It is desirable that the reader should have a clear idea about it. Whoever in our time would have taken up this mission, political considerations would have dominated his mind and he would have spoken in political language. He would have been full of patriotic fervour and talked about rights and demands and argued about them. It is, no doubt, correct that Fir'awn had enslaved Bani Isra'il and oppressed them. The Glorious Qur'an has vividly described, with its matchless eloquence, the sea of troubles in which they were placed:

"And (remember) when We delivered you from Fir'awn's folk, who were afflicting you with dreadful torment, slaying your sons and sparing your women. That was a tremendous trial from your Lord."
(Qur'an, *al-Baqarah:* 49)

"Truly, Fir'awn exalted himself in the earth and made its people castes. A tribe among them he oppressed, killing their sons and sparing their women. Lo! he was of those who work corruption."
(Qur'an, *al-Qasas:* 4)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Anybody who had come forward to defend the people who were being victimised and tried to free them from the clutches of a tyrant, surely would have been full of patriotic zeal and national pride and he would have talked about rights and demands. It is common knowledge that the language of rights and demands is different from the language of the Prophets, as are its implications.

But the point towards which I want to draw your particular attention is that the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, like other prophets was a Messenger with whom **"Allah spoke directly"** (Qur'an, *an-Nisa:* 164) and was first and foremost one who called to the way of Allah. His mission was to call people to the true way, beliefs and faith. Think over these *ayat* and see how Musa, peace be upon him, kept to his position of inviting to the way of Allah, from beginning to end, with the guidance of Allah. He did not allow national pride, patriotism or the will to protest (against repression and denial of rights) to interfere in his chief mission. He was in a position in which an ordinary person would forget everything, and his zeal for national pride would get the upper hand and he would start speaking in the language of political leaders. But the call which the Prophet Musa gave to Fir'awn was for belief in Allah. He explained to him the religious truths and reminded him of the dispensation of Allah in regard to former communities.

Fir'awn's Wazirs Used a Double-edged Weapon

The chiefs of Fir'awn's people said:

"'O King will you allow Musa and his people to make mischief in the land, and flout you and your gods?' He said: 'We will slay their sons and spare their women, for we are in power over them.'"
(Qur'an, *al-A'raf:* 127)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

These people wanted one means to serve two ends. On the one hand they wanted to incite Fir'awn and, on the other, the common people against Musa, peace be upon him, and Bani Isra'il:

"Will you allow Musa and his people to make mischief in the land, and flout you and your gods?"

Thus they wanted to incite both Fir'awn and the people.

A Glorious Example of Prophetic Spirit

At this unexpected and dangerous turn when a man is excited, Musa, peace be upon him, did not give up the mode of address to which he was accustomed nor did he forget the message he was bound to convey.

If there had been any other scholar, teacher or political leader, he would have accused Fir'awn and quarrelled with these people, but Musa, peace be upon him, addressed his own people, who were his first concern because he expected that Allah would bring a change in their pitiable conditions through him.

A Rightly-Guided Preacher

"And Musa said to his people: seek help in Allah and endure. Truly, the earth is Allah's, He gives it for an inheritance to whom He will. And the sequel is for those who fearfully obey (Him)."
(Qur'an, *al-A'raf:* 128)

The Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said: "**Seek help in Allah.**" He did not ask them to depend on their numerical strength nor their wisdom. Bani Isra'il had, without doubt, always distinguished themselves in their intellectual and mental faculties from others. But Musa, peace be

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

upon him, did not say any such thing even though their national pride would have been buoyed up by it. If he wanted he could easily have done so because he belonged to them. But it appeared as if he was delivering a discourse from the *mimbar* of a mosque.

This is the role of a true prophet who was firmly set on the "straight path" and who was adept in inviting to the way of Allah and tutored for an important mission.

It was an 'invitation' to the way of Allah; a call to rely and entrust everything to Allah and a call to stand with courage and determination against Fir'awn's tyranny.

"We will slay their sons and spare their women, for we are in power over them."

This act was not a temporary measure but a general one practised on a permanent basis by Fir'awn. It showed the measure of his tyranny. But the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, said to his people:

"Seek help in Allah and endure; the earth is Allah's."

These words must have been difficult for Fir'awn to bear. It was not easy to say in his court that the land did not belong to Fir'awn, or even to Bani Isra'el. If the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, had been a political or national leader he would have said, "The land belongs to us, we own it." This is the language commonly used by national leaders. During British rule in India national leaders used to proclaim that the country did not belong to Englishmen. But Musa, peace be upon him, said in the presence of Fir'awn, that the land belongs to Allah. He did not say that it belonged to his forefathers and that the people had

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

inherited it. If he had said so, he would have been within his rights since Bani Isra'il had been settled there for hundreds of years. They had all the same rights as the Copts or members of the royal family because they were citizens of that country. But the stand of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was altogether different. He said to his people: **"Seek help in Allah and endure. Truly, the earth is Allah's. He gives it for an inheritance to whom He will."**

It also meant that Musa, peace be upon him, wanted to make it plain to his people that if Fir'awn was removed and they took his place it would not be for an indefinite time. That was against "the ways of Allah".

"He gives it (the land) for an inheritance to whom He will."

The end result is with the pious, those who fear Allah. The land does not belong to any individual or family. No nation remains in power for all time. It is the Truth that ultimately triumphs.

"Then We appointed you viceroys on the earth after them, that We might see how you behave."
(Qur'an, *Yunus:* 15)

A Discouraging and Heart-rending Imputation

The charge which might have hurt Musa, peace be upon him, the most must have been the imputation made by Bani Isra'il:

"We suffered hurt before you came to us, and since you have come to us."
(Qur'an, *al-A'raf:* 129)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Musa, peace be upon him, was ordained to free Bani Isra'il from slavery to Fir'awn, rescue them from the contemptible life they were living in Egypt and guide them towards 'the way of Allah'. But how did they repay him for his immense kindness and unforgettable service?

"We suffered hurt before you came and after you came."

Bani Isra'il were not different from other nations. Other nations to whom Messengers of Allah had been sent had accused them in a similar manner. *Surah Yasin* records:

"We augur ill of you."
(Qur'an, *Yasin:* 18)

It appears that Bani Isra'il wanted to insinuate: "You (Musa) have proved inauspicious for us as thousands of our children have been killed because of you". How frustrating and heart-rending it would have been when those people turned out to be so ungrateful and said such harsh words to a person who gave up his life of ease and comfort and staked his life for them! If they were not inclined to be thankful at least they ought to have kept quiet. But they said: "**We suffered hurt before you came among us and since you came in our midst.**" It means that they considered the birth of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, unpropitious because of their sufferings which had continued as before.

An 'Inviter' is Such under all Conditions

What reply did Musa, peace be upon him, give? This is a second example of his stand as a true prophet. He did not take notice of this disheartening remark nor did he lose temper. He behaved as if he had not heard them say it and what he said instead is a proof of his prophetic dignity. He said:

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"It may be that your Lord is going to destroy your adversary and make you viceroys on the earth, that He may see how you behave."
(Qur'an, *al-Aʿraf:* 129)

The position of one who calls to the way of Allah is altogether different from others; he calls to the way of Allah under all conditions. It would not be wrong to say that he calls to the way of Allah in all aspects of his life including his personal and domestic life. We find the same attitude in the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It seems that this ingratitude of Bani Isra'il had no effect on Musa, peace be upon him, and he simply conveyed good news to them: "**it is likely that Allah may deal destruction on your enemies and make you viceregents in their place**." He did not stop at that. He also warned them to remain mindful so that *shaytan* might not mislead them and they might not commit the same mistakes they had made earlier, and then he ended his talk with a note of caution: "**that He may see how you behave.**" He warned them that, like the Copts, they might also lead a luxurious life as did the courtiers of Firʿawn who indulged in excesses. Allah might grant them a turnabout of fortune: "**that He might test which of you excels in good deeds**".

"Lo! the earth is Allah's. He gives it for an inheritance to Whom He will and the sequel is for those who fearfully obey (Him)."
(Qur'an, *al-Aʿraf:* 128)

"And verily we have written in the scripture, after the Reminder: My righteous slaves will inherit the earth."
(Qur'an, *al-Anbiya:* 105)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

It would not be out of place to mention here that the spirit of inviting to the way of Allah overpowers the mind and soul of the one who calls, and, whatever he says and does, that spirit radiates from his words and deeds.

What the Prophet Musa Wanted

Bani Isra'il were to undergo another severe trial which was likely to be more painful and distressing. Musa, peace be upon him, led his people in exodus from Egypt to rescue them from the tyranny and oppression of Fir'awn because they were being repressed on account of their race and religion and were living a miserable life. The Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, thought of the exodus to the Sinai Peninsula – a place of peace and freedom – beyond Fir'awn's kingdom. Although Bani Isra'il had different ideas, Allah had destined that Fir'awn and his army would be drowned in the sea. Musa, peace be upon him, started the journey in the darkness of night. There was only one land route between the Arabian Peninsula and the desert of Africa connecting Africa and Asia and it was in the north-east of Egypt. But the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, lost his way. It was, however, not a chance occurrence. It was destined by Allah. He strayed towards the Red Sea.

It is contrary to the mercy of Allah that He should allow His believers to be an easy prey to their enemies. It is not expected of a just ruler or loving father or a kind-hearted gentleman. The conditions were apparently hazardous but the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, had no doubts about the outcome. He was a prophet and he knew that Bani Isra'il had set out a night at the behest of Allah and everything was at His command and there was nothing to be afraid of. That is why he said with full confidence:

"My Lord is with me. He will guide me."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shu'ara:* 62)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

We find a similar incident in the life of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which the Glorious Qur'an has described as below:

"When the two were in the cave, when he said to his comrade: 'Grieve not. Truly, Allah is with us.'"
(Qur'an, *at-Tawbah:* 40)

The incident has been mentioned in Sahih Bukhari and all the biographies of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. When he and his companion, Abu Bakr, were hiding in the cave of Thaur and when Abu Bakr heard the footsteps of Quraysh he said "O Prophet! If they look down at their feet they can find us." The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "What do you think about two of whom the third is Allah?"

There is a similarity in the utterances of the two great prophets, peace be on them both. They were both prophets and had such unshakable confidence. They had confidence in the Power and Mercy of God which even the great philosophers of their times lacked. No doubt, it is the gift of Allah and He confers it on whomever He wishes.

The Children of Isra'il lost track of the land route, which was shorter. When the morning dawned they saw the Red Sea in front of them and the army of Fir'awn behind them in hot pursuit. Bani Isra'il cried out: "What will we do now?" They started suspecting Musa and said: "You have brought us to a place where we find ourselves in the clutches of Fir'awn. We are between the devil and the deep blue sea." Musa, peace be upon him, again showed his prophetic dignity:

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"And when the two hosts saw each other, those with Musa said: 'We are indeed caught.'"
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara:* 61)

What would a political leader say in such a situation? That "we made our plan after careful thought and we working according to it. We are sure we will succeed."

Never, My Lord is with Me

But what the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, who was divinely guided, said to his men was:

"My Lord is with me. He will guide me."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara:* 62)

He said these words with perfect confidence in the Divine Power of Allah. He believed that the night journey was undertaken by the command of Allah. He knew that Allah never causes those who rely on Him to despair and never goes back on His promise. Why should he be then afraid of the sea and Firᶜawn's army?

What Happened Then?

The following *ayat* of the Glorious Qur'an describe the subsequent events:

"Then we revealed to Musa, saying: 'Strike the sea with your staff.' And it parted, and each part was as a vast mountain. Then We brought near the other to that place. And We saved Musa and those with him, all of them. We drowned the others. Herein is indeed a sign, yet most of them are not believers. And your Lord! He is indeed the Mighty, the Merciful."
(Qur'an, *ash-Shuᶜara:* 63-68)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

A Believer Who Hid His Faith

It would be proper to mention the Prophet Muhammad's way, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, of calling to Allah, after those of the Prophets Ibrahim, Yusuf and Musa, peace be upon them all. But instead I would like to defer the 'invitation' of the final Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, nearer to the close of this series because it is the ultimate object of our study and research and the culminating point of the entire gamut of the learning and teachings of the Glorious Qur'an.

So I am presenting at this point in the series examples of a believer's way of calling to Allah, one who was not a prophet. I have already said that if the Glorious Qur'an had confined itself to narration of the ways of the prophets, peace be upon them all, in calling their peoples to Allah there would be a gap which would allow the common man to say that "they were pure and innocent Messengers of Allah, peace be upon them all, who received revelations and were guided for the task, and we do not stand anywhere in comparison to them, so how can we follow their example?" In this context I, therefore, thought fit to present the preachings of an ordinary believer who had embraced Islam at the time of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. He belonged to the family of Fir'awn and his discourses in the court (of Fir'awn) have thus been described in the Glorious Qur'an:

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"And Fir'awn said: 'Allow me to kill Musa, and let him cry unto his Lord. I fear that he will alter your religion or that he will cause confusion in the land.' Musa said: 'I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every scorner who does not believe in a Day of Reckoning.' And a believing man of Fir'awn's family, who hid his faith, said: 'Would you kill a man because he said: My Lord is Allah, and he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord. If he is lying, then his lie is upon him; and if he is truthful, then some of that with which he threatens you will strike you. Truly, Allah does not guide one who is a prodigal, a liar. O my people! Yours is the kingdom today, you being uppermost in the land. But who would save us from the wrath of Allah should it reach us?' Fir'awn said: 'I do but show you that which I think, and I do but guide you to wise policy.' And he who believed said: 'O my people! I fear for you a fate like that of Nuh's folk and 'Ad and Thamud, and those after them, and Allah does not wish injustice for (His) slaves. And, O my people! I fear for you a Day of mutual summoning, a day when you will turn to flee, having no preserver from Allah. And he whom Allah sends astray, for him there is no guide. And truly, Yusuf brought you of old clear proofs, yet you did not cease to be in doubt concerning what he brought you till when he died, you said: Allah will not send any messenger after him. Thus Allah leaves to stray him who is a prodigal, a doubter. Those who wrangle concerning the revelation of Allah without any warrant that has come to them, it is greatly hateful in the sight of those who believe. Thus Allah prints on every arrogant, disdainful heart.'"
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 26-35).

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

A (Well-Timed) Debate Full of Wisdom

I refer to the debate which was initiated by the 'believing man' who had not disclosed his faith. The debate is a fine example of sagacity, eloquence and deep knowledge of human psychology. A debate between a king of the realm and a courtier who believed in Allah. It is, in fact, a classic of literature; it is in its way elegant and shows an enlightened way of inviting to the way of Allah for the discerning. We find in it profound knowledge of human psychology, and the use of hope and fear in the course of inviting to the way of Allah. The *ayah* the Glorious Qur'an has which says: "**Enter houses by their doors**", points to the same wisdom.

It is the story of a person about whom we know nothing. We do not know where he was brought up and educated, what intelligence he had and what eloquence he commanded. But we know that the power of *iman* is such that it lends speech to the dumb and hearing to the deaf. There have been those who have fought without a sword and yet are *mujahidun*.

The Barricades of the Rulers

Fir'awn said:

"Allow me to kill Musa, and let him cry to his Lord. Truly, I fear that he will alter your religion."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 26)

It has been a settled policy of ruling classes that they suppress such persons who raise their voice against opression. It is, in fact, their political strategy that they incite hatred against such persons among the people by appealing to their sense of honour and pride. Fir'awn used this trick with cunning, for people are apt to be concerned with their faith and religion. They have been dear to men in all

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

times whether they were right or wrong, whether they were based on revelation or otherwise. Faith is very often dearer to people than their lives and property and they sacrifice everything to preserve it. That is why Fir'awn said:

"I fear that he will alter your religion."
Then he added:
"He will cause confusion in the land."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 26)

Thus he also warned those people who were more patriotically-minded than religious, and more sensitive to solidarity and peace in the country. It was known that Fir'awn had instigated these patriotic people against the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, by appealing to their patriotism. Musa, peace be upon him, said:

"I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every scorner who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning."
(Qur'an, *al-Mum'in:* 27)

Musa, peace be upon him, did not pay heed to Fir'awn's arrogant utterances. He knew the mind of Fir'awn, he who had once said:

"O my people! Is not mine the sovereignty of Egypt and these rivers flowing under me? Can you not then discern?"
(Qur'an, *az-Zukhruf:* 51)

That is why when Fir'awn repeated the same claim in a haughty and arrogant manner, Musa, peace be upon him, ignored it and said:

"I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

every scorner who does not believe in a Day of Reckoning."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 27)

A Gentle and Persuasive Talk

A man, who belonged to the family of Fir'awn and had embraced Islam but had hidden it, stood up at this moment and said:

"Would you kill a man because he says: 'My Lord is Allah.'"

It was an appeal for mercy, but along with it he invited them to think: "What is his faith? You want to kill a man because he says 'my lord is Allah'. Fir'awn himself has claimed godhood, does he not then deserve to be killed? O my people! If an iota of justice has been left in you, just think it over. If a person believes in Allah Who created him and brought him up, fed him, will you kill him if he says: 'My Lord is Allah'? On the contrary there is a man who has been created, who is always in need, who is dependent on the Creator for his very breath from the time he was born till this moment, who will be unable to exist without being sustained by Him, that man claims godhood and nobody points an accusing finger at him! What sort of justice is this?" The 'believing man' tried to arouse the sense of justice of the courtiers of Fir'awn and to find out whether they had any trace of gentleness and sense of discretion to differentiate between vice and virtue, right and wrong, high and low, the Creator and the created. It was a challenge to all those who were present in the court.

Facts as the Basis of Argument

The believing man strengthened his argument with the fact that Musa, peace be upon him, had brought clear proofs from the Lord and hinted at the miracles which the Pro-

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

phet Musa, peace be upon him, had performed at the behest of Allah.

"Then he flung down his staff and it was a manifest snake; and he drew out his hand (from his bosom) and it was white for the beholders."
(Qur'an, *al-Aʿraf:* 107-108)

These miracles were such clear proofs as nobody could refute, because one can argue about things which concern the intellect or the faculty of thinking, but there can be no room for argument about what one sees with one's own eyes. The believing man said the very thing which everyone could understand. He addressed them in a manner they knew well and which was logical and reasonable:

"If he is lying, then his lie is upon him; and if he is truthful, then some of that with which he threatens you will strike you. Truly, Allah does not guide one who is a prodigal, a liar."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 28)

In a way he said, "O my people! do not put yourselves in such a difficult position from which it will be hard to get out. This man (i.e. the Prophet Musa) calls himself a prophet appointed by Allah. If he is true, the threat he holds out will surely come to pass. If he is a liar, God forbid, then it will cause his doom and you will not, in anyway, be responsible for it."

The Unchanging Ways of Allah

The third point towards which he drew their attention was the unalterable ways of Allah:

"Yours is the kingdom today, you being uppermost in the land."

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

This way he tried to impress upon the *wazirs* of Fir'awn that they should not be deceived by this passing glory. It was as if he said: "No doubt, you are in power over a vast country, you are all men of substance and roll in the lap of luxury. You lay down the law, pull the strings of government, and you are well prepared both for defence and attack. But with all that, if the punishment of Allah strikes you, who will save you from it?" He invited their attention to the unalterable ways of Allah:

"If he is truthful, then some of that with which he threatens you will strike you ... who will save us from the wrath of Allah should it reach us?"
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 28-29)

As if he said: "You think you wield power in your kingdom and you do whatever you please, command anything you like, nobody can stop you from doing what you will. But you forget there is One Power above you, though you believe in Him, but associate others (as partners) with Him." At this Fir'awn said:

"I only show you what I think and I only guide you to wise policy."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 29)

There is no substance in what Fir'awn said "**I only show you what I think**". He ought to have produced evidence from revealed books or adduced some logical argument. But he could not do so and admitted his defeat when he said: "**I only show you what I think**", which was without any basis and could be advanced by any dullard or erring man.

The Examples of Past Nations

The believing man cut short Fir'awn's remarks and said:

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"O my people! I fear for you a fate like that of the factions (of old); a plight like that of Nuh's folk, and ʿAd and Thamud and those after them, and Allah does not will injustice for (His) slaves."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 30-31)

It is evident from the above *ayat* that Firʿawn, his *wazirs* and sycophant courtiers, knew about the downfall of these nations and the nations which had come after them and which were destroyed for their disbelief.

The Punishment in the Hereafter
Then he said:

"O my people! I fear a Day of mutual summoning."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 32)

It means that: "you should know that kingship has no stability. If it were so, the kingdoms of ʿAd and Thamud would have continued and not met their doom. When their kingdoms fell, what special reason do you have that your kingdom would endure? If there was any difference in moral values between you and those nations, and if you had followed the way shown by the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, there could be a chance that you would continue to rule in the land for some time. But you rule with a rod of iron and have the same weaknesses for which the erring nations had been exterminated. I am afraid you will meet the same fate. Where, then, is the line of demarcation between you and those extinct nations." The 'believing man' added:

"O my people! I fear a Day of mutual summoning."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 32)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The Day of Judgement, when the people will call each other, and there will be uproar, tumult and utter confusion.

Shouting and clamour were not unknown to Fir'awn and his courtiers. They used to hold processions and there were fairs also. They knew what happens at such times and places. That is why he hinted at the **"Day of Mutual Summoning"** and further added:

"A day when you will turn to flee."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 33)

These words must have been very hard for Fir'awn to hear. Because the worst thing for a ruler is defeat when his army turns its back and runs from the battlefield. Fir'awn had not thought of such a situation. He had a large and well-equipped army. He knew very well the meanings of **"turn to flee"** and the disgrace and ignominy faced by the King, and the army which is put to rout. That is why the believing man said:

"A day you will turn to flee, having no preserver from Allah. And he whom Allah sends astray for him there is no guide."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 33)

A Sensible Point

Then the believing man, who was blessed with wisdom and intelligence, raised a very sensible point. He pointed out an age-old human weakness; a man does not value blessings so long as they are available to him. It is in the nature of man that he thinks little of what he possesses. He does not value them so long as he can afford them – he disregards them and does not consider them worth gratifying. He values the past and feels its importance. He

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

grieves over it if it is taken away from him. People always eulogise the dead. They extol their virtues one by one. But the living they hold in contempt and treat as men like themselves. They ask "what special quality does he have?" But when a man dies, poets write eulogies and odes about him and he is praised to the skies. It is a malady which keeps many people away from great contemporaries. The believing man invited their attention to this ingratitude inherent in human nature:

"Truly Yusuf brought you of old clear proofs yet you continued to be in doubt concerning what he brought you till when he died, you said, 'Allah will not send any messenger after him.'"
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 34)

"The Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was unique in many respects. He was gentle, merciful and a just ruler. As long as he lived, people found fault with him, and cast aspersions upon him. May it not be that you treat Musa, peace be upon him, in the same manner. When Musa, peace be upon him, is no longer among you, you will say that 'he was a valuable gift for us. No prophet was like him, nor would anyone like him ever come in future.' I warn you against this sort of behaviour. Do not make the same mistake again.

The Vicious Nature of Fir'awn

I invite your attention to these words:

"Allah will not send any messenger after him."

It means that they were not prepared to believe that Allah will send any messenger after Yusuf, peace be upon him.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"Thus Allah leaves to stray him who is a prodigal, a doubter. Those who wrangle concerning the revelation of Allah without any warrant that has come to them, it is greatly hateful in the sight of those who believe. Thus Allah prints on every arrogant, disdainful heart."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 34-35)

The fact remains that the cause of all frustrations, disappointments and failure to benefit from the bounties of Allah is arrogance. An indefatigable prophet like Musa, peace be upon him, called to the way of Allah and those magicians who were called upon to oppose and defeat him provided a clear evidence of his prophethood by embracing Islam at his hands. Faith takes them out of Fir'awn's camp and makes them join the group of those who call to the way of Allah and of those who sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah and attain martyrdom. They became such staunch Muslims that it was as if they had been brought up in the lap of a prophet from childhood, though their acquaintance with Musa, peace be upon him, was not long. The miracle they had seen had softened their hearts and the seed of *iman* was imprinted on their hearts. They boldly declared:

"So decree what you will decree. You will end for us only the life of the world."
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 72)

The believing man tried his best to bring Fir'awn to his senses, but he was adamant. It is this peculiarity of Fir'awn's character we call arrogance and it has been mentioned several times in the narration of Musa, peace be upon him:

"I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every scorner who does not believe in a Day of Reckoning."

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

A Common Point Between Musa and the Mu'min

The believing man again said:

"Thus Allah leaves to stray him who is a prodigal, a doubter. Those who wrangle concerning the revelation of Allah without any warrant that has come to them."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 35)

The central theme in the whole narration and the key element in the make up of Fir'awn is arrogance. Musa, peace be upon him, and the believing man knew this weakness of Fir'awn and this was the fact known to both of them. They expressed their sorrow over it because it prevented Fir'awn, his *wazirs,* and coterie from benefitting from their pragmatic and cogent teachings.

The Weak Point

The truth about the transient character of this world and the infinite character of the world to come (*Akhirah*) has been depicted vividly in the following *ayat*:

"And he who believed, said: 'O my people! Follow me. I will show you the way of right conduct ... this life of the world is but a passing comfort; the Hereafter, that is the enduring home."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 38-39)

The main stumbling block which stood in Fir'aw's way (to accepting the truth) was his pride on being the monarch of a vast kingdom. It was, therefore, necessary to point out the transient nature of the world to him. The believer, thus, placed his finger on the weak point of Fir'awn. Then he described Allah's just and inviolable law of retribution from which nobody can escape:

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"Whoever does an ill deed, will be repaid the like thereof, while whoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, (all) such will enter the Garden, where they will be nourished without stint."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 40)

Invitation to Differentiate Between the Profitable and Deceitful

Then the believing man presented another aspect. It was the consequence of people's incompetence in differentiating between the useful and the harmful, between sincerity and insincerity.

"O my people! What ails me that I call you to deliverance when you call me to the Fire? You call me to disbelieve in Allah and ascribe to Him as partners that of which I have no knowledge, while I call you to the Mighty, the Forgiver."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 41-42)

He wanted to impress on his own people that they should think over what Fir'awn had said and what he was saying: "I show you the way to salvation and invite you to the Merciful and Forgiving Allah and Fir'awn invites you to the way of death and damnation."

"Assuredly that to which you call me has no claim in the world or in the Hereafter, and our return will be to Allah, and the prodigals will be owners of the Fire."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 43)

The gentle teacher (the believing man) warned the courtiers that although Fir'awn's claim had no substance it was being thrust upon them. In fact, all calls which are

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

not backed by revelation are meaningless and without purpose. They have nothing to do with knowledge and certitude. They are far-fetched and remote from the teachings of true prophets, peace be upon them all. They spring up like mushrooms or weeds which gardeners and farmers root out and throw away.

The one who called them to the way of Allah drew their attention to the "way of life" towards which they were inviting him and said "**it has no merit either here or in the next world.**" They asked: "Is there any proof of what you say?" then replied themselves: "No, it is nothing but opportunism or following your own whims and wishes."

The Last Warning Which Every Teacher Gives

In the end the believing man movingly poured out his heart and left everything to Allah. It was a call from the depth of his heart and the last attempt to make wise counsel prevail with them. It was a warning which every well-wisher and teacher gives in the end, when all arguments and pleadings fail. It was the last word for he said nothing after that:

"And you will remember what I say to you. I confide my cause unto Allah. Truly, Allah sees (His) slaves."
(Qur'an, *al-Mu'min:* 44)

It is the best way of concluding any discourse for everyone who calls to the way of Allah ends his talk with these words when his listeners are disinclined to take his advice.

This debate has no parallel in its methods, and the Glorious Qur'an has made it immortal by its eloquent and inimitable description. It is unmatched in its natural and

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

logical order because the mind moves from one aspect to another. It is unparalleled from the beginning to the end. It serves as a beacon in our calling people to Allah, and, if any despotic power stands in our way, we can discharge our responsibility in the light of this debate.

It is a fine example of inviting to the way of Allah based on the teachings of the prophets, peace be upon him. It is an admonition to which one who calls to the way of Allah takes recourse as the last resort. It is the example of one calling to Allah who was not a prophet nor was he an important person among the companions of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. The Glorious Qur'an has mentioned him as **"a believing man of Fir'awn's family"** who hid his faith. We can learn a lot from it and deduce from it many valuable principles for our guidance in calling people to the way of Allah.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Two Examples of the Final Prophet of Allah

The Discourse on Safa

Each and every act of the sublime and brilliant life of the final Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, particularly with respect to his mission of calling people to Allah, is a miracle. I begin with the first event in sequence in his public mission (when he commenced by speaking publicly from Mount Safa). I want you to bear in mind the environment and the difficulties which came in his way when he initiated his mission. The "invitation" was to believe in Allah, the Oneness of Allah, to give up polytheism, idol-worship and a life devoid of prophetic guidance. I want you to bring before your mind's eye the circumstances in which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, started to give a practical shape to his mission.

A Prophet is a Bridge Between the Seen and Unseen Worlds

Whatever the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, wanted to say to Quraysh, the Arabs, his contemporaries and mankind, was based on two concepts. The first is that the world in which we live, see and feel is not the be-all and end-all of life. There is also another invisible world which we do not perceive. It is beyond the perception of man. The other point on which his invitation was based was to remind mankind about proph-

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

ethood. A prophet is a medium or a sort of a "bridge" through which we can create a link between this world and the next (which is concealed from our view and lies outside the realm of material phenomena). There is no other way through which man in this world can acquaint himself with the coming world, as all other means at our disposal are limited and ineffectual. The intellect is bound by the five senses granted to man and the invisible world is beyond his perception.

When does Reason Begin to Work?

Intellect depends on perception by the sensory organs. It draws its conclusions from the information supplied by them. Intellect is a faculty which infers from the perceptions received by man. It is unavailing where perceptions fail to supply any information because human reason has nothing to fall back upon except these impressions. It is a reality of which intellectuals generally are not aware. They think that intellect is something self-sufficient, i.e. it functions on its own without assistance from outside faculties. Modern philosophy has, however, established that intellect is useless without the help of the five senses and it cannot exist independently.

The Remoteness of the Arabs from Prophetic Teaching

The trouble was that the Arabs in general and people of Makkah in particular were unacquainted with prophetic teachings. They had no occasion to receive such teachings for a very long time and had no idea of the unseen world for many generations. The prophetic link which acts as a bridge between the present world and the next had not been there for many centuries. The Glorious Qur'an has described it in its miraculous way:

"That you may warn a folk whose fathers were

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

not warned, so they are heedless."
(Qur'an, *Yasin:* 6)

The same theme has been repeated at another place:

"But does their knowledge reach to the Hereafter? Nay! for they are in doubt concerning it. Nay! for they cannot see."
(Qur'an, *an-Naml:* 66)

"But they denied that, the knowledge of which they could not comprehend, and of which the interpretation (in events) has not yet come to them."
(Qur'an, *Yunus:* 40)

The Prophet Muhammad Addressed these Ignoramuses (People who did not know the ABC of the way of Allah)

The most difficult problem was that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was enjoined to invite such a people to the Truth (*Haqq*) who did not know the rudiments of the way of Allah or have any idea about it. They were simply incapable of understanding religious truths.

For example, take the case of a real philosopher, a scholar or a genius. If he does not know Arabic and you place an Arabic newspaper in his hands and ask him to read and explain the contents in a day or two and if he has no guide, he will be unable to do it simply because he does not know the language. The same is true of those perceptions which are like alphabets for human reasoning.

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had to address a people who did not know

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

even the ABC of the way of Allah. The environment in which they had been born and brought up was devoid of any schooling and was not receptive to prophetic teaching – indeed any teaching. It was, first of all, necessary for them to have a clear conception of prophethood so that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, could take the next step of conveying revelations and prophetic teachings to them.

Prophets Draw Far-Reaching Conclusions from Ordinary Events

The Arabs of Makkah had been unacquainted with the terminology of the way of Allah for a long time. But they had a keen insight and had the good quality of realism, a lot of common sense and a keen sense of observation. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had those qualities of the Arabs in view when he decided to tell them about prophethood and the elevated position of a prophet. He wanted to prove that he stood at a place from where he could forewarn about the imperceptible realities and the dangers that lay ahead of them.

His way of instruction was better than scores of arguments. It was the way which great speakers and scholars, perfect in spirit, had used earlier. The various phases through which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, passed, the ways and means which he employed and the methods he adopted in discharging the onerous duties of prophethood were in accord with the nature of Arabs and they were the same principles used by all the earlier prophets. The prophets, peace be upon them all, did not use ornate language, useless metaphors and philosophical jargon in their discourses. They, however, drew far-reaching conclusions from common incidents of everyday occurrence.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The Prophet Muhammad was an Arab and Knew Their Minds

During the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, there were no such media as newspapers, loudspeakers, the radio, etc. Then what was the method of collecting people so that they might leave their work and gather in one place in order that they could be told something? Because the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was himself an Arab, he knew their customs, social habits, national traditions and psychology. He used traditional methods to propagate the true way. There is no more admirable and virtuous work than this.

It was the custom with the Arabs that if anybody came to know of any oncoming danger or apprehended a sudden enemy attack of which his other fellow countrymen were not aware, he would climb up a mountain or a hillock and cry out:

"Ya Sabahah! Ya Sabahah!"

People would give up their occupations at once and rush to hear him.

What could have been the danger for which they had to give up their business in hand and collect at one place and what was it that kept them on tenterhooks? They knew of just one danger and it was the raids of gangs of robbers. If successful the raiders used to kill people, plunder, and carry off their womenfolk, steal camels and other animals.

The Inner Enemy is Worse than the Outer One

The damages inflicted by the external enemy, however severe, did not carry much weight with the prophets, peace be upon them all, because they knew that the greatest danger and cause of disaster is man's ignorance of his Creator. The greatest danger with them is life devoid of pro-

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

phetic teachings and the vices that crop up owing to ignorance of these teachings. Ja'far ibn Abi Talib recounted in the Court of the Negus:

> "We Arabs used to worship idols, devour carrion, commit wrong actions, break off blood relations, tyrannise our neighbours and the high and mighty used to oppress the poor and the weak."

The enemy which had infiltrated into their lives in the form of beliefs and usages was more dangerous than any external enemy according to the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This danger which sprang from their inner selves was more harmful than that which they used to experience in their lives. It was a part of Arab tribal society of the pagan past. The enmity of their inner selves was not less troublesome nor less grave than the enmity of any adversary. The life they were leading was sure to invite the wrath of Allah Who does not like His slaves to live in disbelief and create disorder in the world.

The Right Call at the Right Time

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, climbed Mount Safa which was close to the dwellings of the Quraysh and called out:

"Ya Sabahah! Ya Sabahah!"

It was a correct call given at a most proper time. The persons who would give such a call used to be important and sober (unlike those of the present age). Nobody would dare give such a call for any fictitious or unimportant matter. This time the people of Makkah had heard a person who was well known and whom everyone used to call the "truthful" and "trustworthy". His entire life was before them. No person more true and sincere than the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

peace, had ever existed in that valley. That is why it has been mentioned in his biographies that there was nobody in Makkah who did not respond to his call and even those who could not come in person (for some reason) sent their representatives.

The Arabs were Just and Brave

When the people of Makkah had collected, the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

> "O you sons of ᶜAbd al-Muttalib! O you scions of the Kaᶜbah! Would you believe me if I were to tell you that there is an army at the other side of the hill likely to attack you?"

The people who were addressed were illiterate, they knew no logic and philosophy but as I have already said, they were sincere and practical people. They had a lot of common sense which is a great boon for any people. When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, addressed them, they quickly surveyed the surroundings and saw that he was standing on top of the hill. He could see the other side of the hill while it was veiled from their view. They readily accepted that he could see the other side which was hidden from them. It was a fact which nobody could deny. (By the same token it does not behove any educated and intelligent persons to refute what the Prophets, peace be upon them all, perceive, since they do not share those perceptions.) The man who is standing at the foot of the hill cannot deny what a person standing on top of the hill sees on the other side of the hill.

Unyielding Obstinacy of the Philosopher

When any quibbler used to argue with the prophets, peace be upon them all, they used to exclaim:

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"Do you dispute with me concerning Allah when He has guided me?"
(Qur'an, *al-An'am:* 81)

But the illiterate Arabs were endowed with practical wisdom and had "knowledge of the world". Many were not like those philosophers and intellectuals who used to challenge the cognition of the prophets, peace be upon them all, and who were suspicious about those truths which were outside of their knowledge and observation:

"... they denied that the knowledge of which they could not comprehend, and of which the interpretation (into events) has not yet come to them."
(Qur'an, *Yunus:* 40)

The Real Problem is Belief in the Unseen

When the first phase was over then he advised them about the other:

"I warn you of the coming punishment."

The people could ask when and where did he see that punishment? But the person standing on top of the hill could see what those at the foot of the hill could not. The Arabs had native wit and they were fair-minded and brave by nature. They took no time in surveying the whole scene and readily testified, if you say there is an army on the other side and ready to attack, it is possible.

The Prophets Stand on the Mount of Prophethood

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, explained in clear terms the high office of prophethood through the wisdom and eloquence which Allah had bestowed on him. The position of the prophets

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

is unique and incomparable. A prophet also sees what his contemporaries see because he too is a man.

"Say: 'I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me...'"
(Qur'an, *al-Kahf:* 110)

But he sees the unseen world also which is hidden from others. They, peace be upon them all, however, do not see the entire unseen world and are aware of as much as Allah wills to reveal to them.

"(He is) the Knower of the unseen and He reveals to no-one His unseen, except a messenger whom He has chosen..."
(Qur'an, *al-Jinn:* 26-27)

The reason is that the Prophets were blessed with qualities which no other man can share with them. Nobody, however intelligent and scholarly he may be, can deny the observations of the prophets, peace be upon them all, because they are able to see what no other man can see.

In fact, the whole problem boils down to just one thing: belief in an unseen world. If, however, a world which is hidden from our sight is accepted, then it will open the way for the possibility of the existence of a hundred and one other worlds. The prophets, peace be upon them all, demanded that one believes in a world which is beyond human perception. When one accepts this as a reality and testifies to such a world which is not perceivable by him then he can believe in a thousand other realities.

The Real Danger Which the People of Makkah Had Forgotten

"I warn you of the coming punishment."

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, warned of the danger which was real and eternal and was the result of the irreligious lives they were leading – the idol worship to which they were sticking and the immoral life they had taken to, through ignorance. In short the dark life of ignorance which they were living – a life devoid of the light of true faith, knowledge, justice and piety – a life full of disorder and without peace of mind which corrodes the vital powers of man.

"Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return."
(Qur'an, *ar-Rum:* 41)

"And truly, We make them taste the lower punishment before the greater, that haply they may return."
(Qur'an, *as-Sajdah:* 21)

Beliefs and Morals are the Themes of the Prophets

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not interfere with their economic, administrative or political life, because these were not the objects of the Makkan period of revelation. What the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had in view was eternal anguish which is bound to befall the wrongdoers in the next world (on account of their ungodly lives). Misfortunes or calamities in this world are nothing compared to that:

"Truly, the punishment of the Hereafter is more painful."
(Qur'an, *ar-Raʿd:* 34)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

"Truly, the punishment of the Hereafter will be sterner and more lasting."
(Qur'an, *Ta-Ha:* 27)

"Verily the punishment of the Hereafter will be more shameful."
(Qur'an, *Ha Mim as-Sajdah:* 16)

The Ways of the Prophets are Different

Experts and research scholars have discovered the properties of medicinal plants and their effects. They have found many secrets of the universe and accumulated a treasure of knowledge which has benefited mankind. Their services are worthy of admiration.

But the speciality of the prophets, peace be upon them all, and the object of their teaching is to impart the knowledge of the Being and Attributes of Allah, of the Divine Pleasure and Displeasure, the secrets of beliefs and useful deeds, of how to differentiate between good and bad, right and wrong, lawful and unlawful, and the helpful and harmful. They taught and practised virtuous deeds which bring success and prosperity and warned against those misdeeds which cause distress and deprivation. They also warned about rewards and punishments, both here in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah also disclosed cosmic realities to the prophets, peace be upon them all, to the extent He willed, and the ultimate destiny of mankind in the coming world according to their deeds in this world.

"He is the Knower of the Unseen, and He reveals to none His unseen, save to a messenger whom He has chosen..."
(Qur'an, *al-Jinn:* 26-27)

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

The Final Warning of the Prophets

The prophets, peace be upon them all, who stood on the peak of prophethood and saw 'things' as much as Allah wills, warned mankind of what the immediate and distant future holds for it and where the dangers lie lurking for it. They expound everything with sincerity, affection and kindness. If some ignoramus argues against or doubts their prophetic teachings, which are based on revelation and intelligence, they simply tell them:

> **"I exhort you one thing only: that you awake, for Allah's sake, by twos and singly, and then reflect. There is no madness in your comrade. He is naught else but a warner to you in the face of a terrible doom."**
> (Qur'an, *Saba:* 46)

The believing man who belonged to the family of Fir'awn had said the same thing to his fellow men:

> **"And you will remember what I say to you. I entrust my cause to Allah. Truly, Allah sees the slaves."**
> (Qur'an, *al-Mum'in:* 44)

A Unique Example of Prophetic Wisdom

I present another illuminating and unique example which is different in its method and manner on account of the special reasons and peculiar circumstances in which it was delivered. It is unparalleled so far as prophetic wisdom is concerned and is a classic of the genre of inviting to the way of Allah. Its classicism as such, however, is not confined to beauty of expression but it is worth studying for its intellectual content and its sound judgement of human psychology. It is also a fine example of an attractive style of enlightened leadership. It thus provides a good

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

subject for research and discussion for scholars particularly researchers in psychology.

When the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, returned from the Battle of Hunayn and camped at Jiʿrrana he distributed the spoils of war, about which you might have read in the Prophet's biographies and writings on Islamic history. He gave larger shares to the Quraysh chiefs who had recently embraced Islam because of psychological expediencies – Abu Sufyan and ʿIkramah received larger shares than others. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had relied on the firm faith and sincerity of his Madinan companions, the Ansar. He was well aware that their fidelity to Islam and love for him had stood the test of time. That is why he did not consider it worthwhile to give them an equal share with those who had embraced Islam recently.

But some young men from the Ansar were aggrieved and expressed dissatisfaction that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had given a larger share to his own tribe. The news reached him and he did not ignore those grumblings of the immature young men, because he was not only a Messenger of Allah but a counsellor, teacher and well-wisher. He asked the Ansar to collect in the courtyard of a house. When they had collected, he said: "What are those grumblings which have come to my notice? You are complaining (about the distribution of the spoils of war)." The Ansar felt ashamed and said, "There is nothing, O Prophet. There are some immature young men. The *shaytan* has seduced them and created doubt in their minds." Then the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Is it not a fact that when I came to you, you were misguided? Allah guided you through me. You were poor and unhappy, and Allah made you prosperous

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

and happy through me. You were enemies to one another, and Allah united you through me and created love amongst you." The Ansar said, "It is true and we are grateful to Allah and the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for this kindness and benevolence."

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not prolong his speech, but then he himself expressed what might have crossed the minds of certain persons. He said, "Why do you not say anything?" The Ansar said, "What can we say? We are grateful to Allah and the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from the depths of our hearts." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If you say so, I will vouch for it, for you could say that 'you came to us when everybody had denied you and we believed in you; you came to us when everybody had forsaken you and we came to your help; you came to us when the people of Makkah had turned you out and we provided shelter for you; when you came to us, you were empty-handed and we served you in every way.'"

Could any leader, benefactor of a community or well-wisher of a family, say all these things against himself? If this dialogue was not found in his biographies and Imam Bukhari had not confirmed it, nobody would have dared repeat these words:

> "The people denied you – we vouched for you; The people deserted you – we helped you; The people turned you out – we sheltered you."

You are Unhappy with Me over Worthless Chattels

When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, touched their sympathetic hearts, tears rolled down their cheeks. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

him peace, further added:

> "O you Ansar! You have a grudge against me, for these worthless chattels. I wanted to reconcile the hearts of new converts so that they may become true Muslims and, as for you, I thought the bounty of Islam is good enough for you."

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, infused new life and a new spirit about Islam and his own self among the Ansar. The result was that a strong wave of love surged in their hearts and washed away the resentment (if there was any). The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then said such words as could cause the rocks to split and springs of water to gush forth from them.

> "O you Ansar! Would you not like that other people carry camels and goats with them and you carry the Messenger of Allah with you? By Allah! if there had been no migration, I would be one of the Ansar. If people were to go along a valley, I would go along the valley where the Ansar go. The Ansar are to me like underclothes and others are like outer garments to me. O Allah! Be kind to the Ansar, their descendants and successors."

What happened then? It had the desired effect. The Ansar wept and, with tears in their eyes, said:

> "We are happy that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, be with us and we are contented with our lot."

The Best Example of Literary Artistry

You may look into any language or history of religions,

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

you will not find a more eloquent mode of persuasion, a deeper knowledge of human psychology employed with wisdom for stilling the hearts of people.

These are a few examples of the art of conveying the truth with prudence which are not to be found in any other literature. They are simply immortal.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

Jaᶜfar ibn Abi Talib as an Emissary

I have presented excellent examples of inviting to the way of Allah by three indefatigable prophets – Ibrahim, Yusuf and Musa, peace be on them all – and reproduced the discussions between them and their peoples those who accepted their "invitation" and those who did not. I have reproduced the words of a believing man who was not a prophet but a contemporary of the Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and whose bosom had been opened by Allah, who had wisdom and *iman* and had the ability and skill to speak on a delicate subject like inviting to the way of Allah. He delivered an eloquent discourse in such a way that it appeared to have been prepared in advance. It had food for thought in it besides being sober. He did not babble in a way of which he would later be ashamed and feel apologetic. Whomever Allah chooses for this high and pious mission he develops these qualities and whoever takes up this task and his object is to present arguments in an indisputable manner he receives divine help.

I have presented two illuminating examples of calling to the way of Allah by the final Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in this book. It is well-nigh impossible to pen all the miraculous examples of the Prophet Muhammad's, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, inviting to the way of Allah. The deeper one delves the more precious pearls of wisdom one discovers.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

In this chapter we turn to another subject, which is the method of inviting to the way of Allah of one of the believers who was brought up under the tutelage of, and had his training from, the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Their number runs into thousands. I present only one of them: Jaʿfar ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, who was a cousin of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He was the same person about whom the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had said, "Jaʿfar, you are very much like me in appearance and disposition."

The Companions' Emigration to Abyssinia

Due to the severity of the persecution the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, experienced in Makkah, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, permitted a group of eighty-three men and their families to emigrate to Abyssinia where a wise christian king called the Negus ruled.

Quraysh were not content that they should live in safety there and sent two men to try and persuade the Negus to return them to Makkah. They took lavish gifts, for the Negus and for each one of his generals, from Makkah, which was a great trading capital of the ancient world, and then explained to the generals what they had come for.

> "Some foolish men from our people have taken refuge in the king's country. They have forsaken our religion and not accepted yours, but have brought an invented religion which neither we nor you know anything about. Our chiefs have sent us to the king to persuade him to return them, so when we speak to the king about them advise him to surrender them to us and not to speak to them, for their own people

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

have the keenest insight and know most about their own faults."

They hoped to have bribed the generals to be on their side and so the generals advised the Negus as suggested, but he insisted on speaking to them. He was furious and said:

"No, by Allah, I will not surrender them. No people who have asked for my protection, settled in my country, and chosen me rather than others, shall be betrayed, until I call them and ask them about what these two men allege."

So he sent for the Companions. They talked among themselves about what they would say when he asked them about their religion and decided that:

"We shall say what we know and what the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has ordered us, no matter what may happen."

When they were with the Negus he asked them what had prompted them to leave the religion of their people without joining any other known religion. Jaᶜfar, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

"O king, we were an uncivilised people, worshipping idols, eating corpses (of animals that had died naturally rather than being slaughtered), doing wrong actions, breaking ties of kinship, treating guests badly, our strong ones oppressing our weak. We were like that until Allah sent us a messenger whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness and compassion we knew. He called us to acknowledge the unity of Allah and to worship Him and to renounce the stones

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

and images which we and our ancestors formerly worshipped. He told us to speak the truth, fulfil our promises and contracts, be mindful of our ties of kinship, be generous to guests, and to avoid committing crimes and spilling blood. He forbade us the major wrong actions and telling lies, eating the property of orphans and slandering chaste women. He told us to worship Allah alone and not associate anything with Him, and he told us to establish the prayer, give from our wealth and to fast. We bore witness to this truth and believed in him, and we followed him in what he had brought from Allah, and we worshipped Allah alone without associating anything with Him. We considered whatever he forbade as forbidden, and whatever he permitted as permitted.

Then our people attacked us, treated us harshly and tried to draw us away from our faith to make us go back to the worship of idols instead of the worship of Allah, and to see the wrong actions we had once done as lawful. When they overpowered us and treated us badly and restricted our lives, and came between us and our way, we came to your country, having chosen you over all others. Here we have been happy in your protection and we hope that we shall not be treated unjustly while we are with you, O King."

The Negus was very interested and asked if they had any of the revelation of their prophet, and so they read to him some of the *ayat* from *Surah Maryam* which they had with them. The *ayat* were about ʿIsa, peace be upon him, and his mother Maryam, peace be upon her, and they were so touching that the Negus and all his generals wept and the Negus swore to protect them and to never send them back to their enemies the Quraysh.

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

But the two men from Quraysh plotted to tell the Negus in the morning something that would shock him and persuade him to take his protection away from the Muslims. They told him that the Muslims said that ᶜIsa, peace be upon him, was a slave of Allah and a prophet and not the son of God as the Christians believed, and so the Negus summoned the Muslims to ask them about this.

Again the Muslims wondered what to tell him and they decided that they could only tell him the truth. So when the Negus asked him, Jaᶜfar said:

> " We say about him (ᶜIsa, peace be upon him) what our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, brought that he is the slave of Allah, and His messenger, and His spirit and His word, which he cast into Maryam the blessed virgin, peace be upon her."

The Negus recognised what they had said and affirmed it, and gave them safety even though his generals were upset, and so the two men of Quraysh left alone back to Makkah.

Discomfiture of the Emissaries of Quraysh

If there were any other person besides Jaᶜfar ibn Abi Talib and he were to be confronted with such an unforeseen situation, he would, no doubt, resort to subterfuge and politicise his answer in a manner that the humanity of the Prophet ᶜIsa, peace be upon him, would become doubtful, and allow the Christians room to think that the Muslims believed the same as they did.

Jaᶜfar was known for his eloquence, excellence and ready wit. He was an extraordinary spokesman of Islam though he was not a prophet. But he was representing the Pro-

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org

phet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in the court of a king. It was, therefore, impossible for him to confuse truth with untruth. That is why whatever he said, it was plain, intelligible and indisputable and he presented it judiciously and with skill, sagacity and in a balanced manner.

Victory in an Intellectual Contest

The result of his probity, sincerity and eloquence was that Ja'far emerged with flying colours through this unprecedented trial. The two emissaries of Quraysh returned discomfited. It is reported that the Negus allowed the Muslims to remain with respect and honour and they lived there in peace under his benign rule.

I conclude these examples and illuminating specimens of skill in inviting to the way of Allah with this episode which took place in terrifying circumstances, the credit of which goes to a relation and companion of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who was skillful and forthright in speech.

These stories are the unfailing guides for those who call to the way of Allah and are worthy of study by lovers of knowledge and literature.

All Praise is due to Allah

www.abulhasanalinadwi.org